SRI HARI

PATH TO DIVINITY



'Śiva'

(Rendered into English by Shri C. L. Goswami and his associates)

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Sri Hari

Preface

This handy volume is a collection of a number of inspiring and illuminating articles from the pen of a learned and saintly writer, who does not feel inclined to disclose his identity and writes under the pen-name of "Śiva". The articles originally appeared every month in the popular and very widely read Hindi monthly, the "Kalyan" under the caption "Kalyan" and were later on rendered into English by the Editors of the English monthly, the "Kalyana-Kalpataru" or the Bliss, and regularly published in it under the caption "Unto Bliss". These articles have been highly appreciated by the readers of both the magazines and are read with avid interest every month. They speak for themselves and provide most excellent and sumptuous spiritual pabulum to the readers. The homely and touching instructions

contained in them have a wonderfully universal appeal and are absolutely free from sectarianism or dogmatic touch. They can be read with equal benefit by the followers of all religious creeds and, if followed with reverence, are sure to take them to lofty spiritual heights.

The articles have also appeared in a number of handy volumes in Hindi and we are reproducing below the words of the author himself introducing the very first volume to the readers:—

"The mind is an ocean of thought-waves. Many such thought-waves arise in the mind of "Śiva" and some of them get recorded too. This small collection of the aforesaid thought-waves reduced to writing is being released. The faults of tautology and desultoriness may be noticed in this collection; for, after all, they are waves of the mind. It is no doubt true that there is a law operating behind the waves too and that they move in regular succession; but we are unable to perceive that order with our physical eyes. What we see

are so many disorderly and irregular forms of the waves moving along with the blasts of the wind. It is possible those who view these waves with a critical eye may be able to discern some order even in this collection of thought-waves. "Śiva", however, has no concern with this. At the instance of the publishers, "Śiva" has only strung together passages strewn here and there and given a heading to them. "Śiva" does not know whether this will or will not prove to be the source of any benefit or amusement to the readers."

As announced in the preface to the previous volume, which saw the light on the last Sri Krishna Janmashtami under the title of "Fountain of Bliss", we feel pleasure in releasing this second volume of the series under the title of "Path to Divinity". I hope this will also be welcomed by English-reading public with the same enthusiasm with which they received the first volume.

Gorakhpur
Ras Purnima, 1970 } C. L. Goswami



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Charmer of the Universe

SRI HARI

Path To Divinity

Turn your eyes towards God.

Human life is a valuable treasure: every moment of it is meant to be devoted to the remembrance of God; hence it should not be wasted. Carefully devote every single moment to

contemplation on God and to His service. Engage yourself constantly in service of God, not only through the body and speech, but through the mind as well. Keep it under observation, watch it; take care that no thief enters the chamber of your heart. Drive out those that are already lurking there, and let them not enter it again.

* * * *

Passion, anger, pride, hypocrisy, infatuation, envy, jealousy and illwill—these are the principal thieves that steal the treasures of your mind. Note each one of them, and wherever you find them lurking, try to drive them out that very moment. Remember, so long as your mind is haunted by these evils, you are far away from God.

* * * *

Try to enthrone the Lord permanently in your heart; thieves will then automatically disappear, just as darkness disappears before the sun. Tack the mind on to the Lord--let the mind go wherever the Lord goes, and let the Lord accompany the mind wherever it goes. Keep an account of every moment of your life. Let not

the mind be detached from God even for a moment.

* * * *

Do not think that the mind is too restive to remain tied to the Lord's feet. Remember, the strength of the mind is nothing compared to your own strength; and whatever strength it possesses has been derived from you. You are the master of the mind and not its slave. It is through the strength it has derived from you, and because you have forgotten your own strength, that the wicked mind has gained ascendancy over you. If you take courage and give it a hard push, it will come round and acknowledge its allegiance to you. Again, you have the infinite strength of the Lord behind you. Have faith in that strength. As soon as you cultivate this faith, you will find that infinite strength within you. Compared to this divine strength, all hostile forces confronting you will appear to be insignificant. They will, then, automatically acknowledge their allegiance to you and turn your helpmates and servants.

* * * *

He who imagines happiness to lie only in the enjoyment of the senses can never expect to

obtain freedom from the slavery of the mind. Dispel the delusion that happiness or comfort lies in the enjoyment of the senses. Happiness exists in God alone, who is your nearest and dearest friend. Locate God as the only seat of happiness. The moment you begin to visualize that happiness, the mirage of earthly happiness which you see before you now will at once disappear.

* * * *

Stay in the world like a traveller in an inn—always circumspect, with no sense of permanence, and always ready to depart. Never allow yourself to be unwary, for thieves will then deprive you of all that you possess. Thieves like passion and anger are always lying in wait to rob you. Do not treat the place you are living in as your permanent abode; it is not your home; if you try to settle down here, you will be forcibly ejected and will feel unnecessarily miserable. If you are not ready, and the train steams off, you will repent for having missed it. It will not be easy to catch the train of this human life again. Therefore, always be alert.

Feel the Presence of God.

The entire universe rests on your mind and the shape and colour in which it appears to you have been lent to it by the mind. If your mind is pure, you will see more of purity in the world.

Remember: He who sees God enshrined in his mind, may see Him reflected in the whole universe. And he whose mind is full of sin, sees the world as full of sin. The *Jivanmukta*, i. e., one who is liberated in this very life, sees the world as full of *Brahma*, and the devotee finds the world full of his beloved Lord. That is why both of them enjoy Supreme Peace and Supreme Bliss at all times and under all circumstances.

If you seek Peace and Happiness, try to form conceptual images of Peace and Happiness in your mind. You are sure to attain the object of your conception, and you will yourself be transformed into an image of that object. If you can persuade yourself into the firm belief that there is no trace of sin or worldly affliction in you, nor can they ever approach you, rest assured that all sin and worldly affliction will forsake you. Not only that, you will be able to drive away even the sin and affliction of others wherever you go.

Be assured that you live constantly under the protection of God, that He never leaves you alone, that He is always there both within and without you, that sin and worldly affliction can never

dare to approach you because of His constant presence with you, that lust and anger can never enter your mind; that you are eternally pure, sinless, wholly free from evil thoughts and evil propensities, healthy and strong in mind and body, and in the enjoyment of eternal Bliss. Go on repeating these suggestions over and over again in your mind, you will notice in a few days that you are being gradually transformed into the very image of these thoughts.

It is true and undoubtedly true that God is eternally present with you, that He constantly looks after you. And viewed as a soul, you are also eternally pure, awakened and sinless. Forgetting this truth, you have clung to the false notion that you are sinful by nature, full of evil thoughts and evil impulses, feeble and helpless, and as a result of this erroneous belief you have actually become so. Now, reverse the practice, and every moment feel within you the Divine Presence, the Divine Grace and the Divine Power.

This does not mean that you should continue to perpetrate sins, that clinging to evil thoughts and evil impulses you should go on fostering

them, that rejecting God you should glory in your earthly possessions, and even while doing so you should all the same imagine yourself to be powerful and strong, and, forgetting God, should remain steeped in self-centred egoism. In conformity with the sublimity of your conviction, sublimate actions as well. It is no doubt true that through the grace of God, the conviction of your mind will become unshakable and your conduct will automatically begin to be pure, but you should feel the Divine Grace from day to day, and overcoming all evils through the power of that Grace, should advance steadily along the path of Bliss. If in the process of rejecting evil thoughts, evil impulses and evil deeds, and adopting in their stead noble thoughts, noble virtues and noble deeds such as remembrance of God, non-injury to others, truthfulness, forbearance, contentment, love, compassion, spirit of service, simplicity and benevolence, etc., some calamity befalls you or you have to face some great peril, do not give up the pursuit of noble virtues and noble deeds in a fit of nervousness; do not entertain the least suspicion in your mind that this has happened because of your rejecting the evil and adopting the good. Rest assured that these

difficulties and perils are no difficulties and perils in the true sense of the term; these are so many helps sent by God in the garbs of difficulties and perils that have come to free you from all blemish by putting you to severe tests. Do not take fright when you are face to face with them. On the contrary, welcome them, and remaining steady and firm in the pursuit of your own simple, noble, pure and determined *Sādhanā*, tear off their mask, and realize them as true helps.

Remember: These difficulties and obstacles in the path of God-realization will take you most speedily to the temple of Salvation, will speedily bring you face to face with God, and will bring your *Sādhanā* to complete fruition. The real obstacles in your way are impatience, despondency, fear, sloth and doubt; it is these that you have to guard against. The greatest obstacles are: (1) the craving for worldly enjoyments, (2) fascination for honour and praise, and (3) lack of faith. As far as possible, try to guard against these three. So long as these are present, evil thoughts, evil impulses and evil deeds will not totally disappear. That God is the only object worth attaining, that the fascination for honour and fame will take you repeatedly to the jaws of

Death, and that lack of faith undermines all thoughts of spirituality—revolving these thoughts repeatedly in your mind, give up the fascination for honour and fame and shake off irreverence and devote yourself exclusively to pursuits leading to God-realization. You will be able to do this easily by developing faith in the omnipresence of God as well as in His Grace and Power.

You are bound to feel the Divine Grace if you persist in your effort to purify the mind and renounce evil thoughts. Constantly strive to usher good thoughts into the mind. With the advent of good thoughts evil thoughts will automatically disappear. Good thoughts will lead to the growth of good impulses and good deeds, and thereby you will be able to attain Supreme Peace and Supreme Bliss. Remember: Supreme Peace and Supreme Bliss exist in God alone, and God is never apart from you; He is constantly with you. His Grace is eternally and incessantly being showered on you, you are always under the blessed shade of His protection; it is He who takes care of everything concerning you, and it is He, again, who personally attends to your daily needs and looks after your safety.

Truth is God.

God is everywhere, He is in everything; nay, He is everything; in fact, He alone exists. This is the reality. Yet in the beginning try to see God only in what is good and auspicious, in

blessedness, in purity, in charity, in service, in irreproachable conduct, in cleanliness of thought, and in noble virtues. By repeating this practice the more your inner eye withdraws from the external world and turns inwards, the clearer will be your vision of God, till at last everything else will disappear and God alone will remain.

But if under the notion--or misapplied notion--that God exists in everything or everything is God you leave out all that is pure and good and pretend to see God only in evil, sin, oppressing others, impurity, inflicting injury on others, lying, adultery, impure thoughts and devilish qualities, you will lose sight of God. The result will be that in the name of seeing God everywhere, you will foster attachment for sin, the consequence of which will be fatal.

Both good and evil proceed from God, are enacted in God: God Himself takes the form of good and evil. All that happens in the world is nothing but God--this truth is realized only when the heart has become pure through right thinking and right conduct. Unless the heart is pure we shall only lend countenance to our weaknesses in

the name of God, and will thus be guilty of perversion of Truth and practise self-deception.

Always have a leaning towards Truth, observe truthfulness, think of Truth, reflect on Truth; be truthful in dealings, truthful in conduct and truthful in action; feel Truth, speak Truth, hear Truth, let your life be permeated through and through with Truth. Through repetition of this practice when at last the real nature of Truth flashes on your mind, when your life is transformed into the purest form of Truth, Truth alone will remain, and then you will perceive Truth even in that which you are asked to reject as false today—the false colour in which Truth is presented to you today will itself be transformed into Truth. Not that the untruth itself will appear as Truth, but the untruth will then cease to exist. It will vanish into nothingness and disappear once for all. The unalloyed form of Truth alone will then remain. All the different manifestations of untruth such as attachment, desire, hatred, anger, greed, infatuation, fear, jealousy, sorrow, etc. will be wiped out of existence at that moment. Not even the faintest shadow of these will remain.

If they come into play anywhere even at this stage, they will be nothing but so many aspects of Truth assumed voluntarily for the protection, propagation, perfection and revelation of Truth and for stemming the tide of untruth. It will be a genuine sport of Truth inspired by and permeated with Truth. The difference between that sport of Truth and the present manifestations of Truth, veiled by untruth, in the shape of ignorance, infatuation, sin, sorrow and fear,—which though based on Truth are so many manifested forms of untruth,—is as wide as between Truth and untruth. If you mistake the latter for Truth, and cling to this delusion, it will be difficult for you to perceive the real Truth.

This Truth is the *Paramatma*, Truth is God. He exists at every time and in everything, nay, He is everything. Realization of this Truth is the ultimate purpose of the unending circle of Karmas of our endless existence. Liberation (*Mukti*), fulfilment of life and God-realization are only synonyms for the realization of this Truth. True, this Truth is eternal and omnipresent. It is equally true that nothing besides this Truth is true in this world; but so long as we do not realize the totality of this Truth, the real nature

of this Truth, which is true in essence, remains hidden from our view. While declaring that all that exists is Truth, and that there is nothing besides Truth, we mistake an obscure fragment of Truth, which has been obscured by us through our own error, as the whole Truth and stand in the way of the whole and real Truth being revealed to us. Thus we go to deceive ourselves. It is necessary for us to strive to dispel this delusion and rectify this error. It may be argued that we shall be repeating the same error by striving to remove what does not exist at all; but this error alone will remove the other error, which though nothing else than Truth stands in the way of our realization of the whole Truth. Hence this 'striving', inasmuch as it helps in the unfoldment of Truth, is no error. It is also Truth in essence. When the true nature of an object is known, all misconceptions with regard to it automatically disappear; that is how the 'effort' to know the Truth, inasmuch as it helps in the understanding of Truth, is also Truth. This effort or striving consists in rejecting the evil—renouncing what is not good (असत्) and accepting what is good (सत्), *i. e.*, adopting right conduct and right thinking, performing noble

actions, practising devotion to God untainted by pride and hypocrisy and striving to know the Truth through cultivation of the fourfold disciplines of Discrimination (विवेक), Dispassion (वैराग्य), the six accomplishments (षट्सम्पत्ति*) and the desire for liberation (मुमुक्षुत्व).

So long as you distinguish between 'good' and 'evil' you can never call them identical in essence. Therefore, if you seek your own well-being, if you really desire to attain peace and happiness, if you are anxious to see God in everything, at every place and at every time, if you want to attain the non-dual realization of God at every moment, then give up the habit of saying that everything, good and evil, is God, and equipping yourself with right action, Devotion coupled with reverence, Discrimination and Dispassion, exert yourself to the best of your ability to know the Reality. May God bless your efforts !



* These six accomplishments are: Composure of mind (शम), Control of senses (दम), Endurance (तितिक्षा), Indifference to worldy objects (उपरति), Faith (श्रद्धा) and Self-satisfaction (समाधान).

Know the All-powerful Soul.

Remember: The soul possesses infinite strength; it is only covered by the thick shroud of Delusion. That is why you find yourself under the control of the mind and the senses; that is why worldly desires and worldly attachments have pitched their tents within you; that is why you are oppressed by the aggressions of sin and woe. If you can by any means tear off that covering sheet, then there is nothing which can withstand the infinite strength of your soul and can oppress or trouble you by any sort of infliction whatsoever.

Faith in soul-force, firm belief in the strength of the soul, is the primary means of tearing off the sheet of Delusion. Delusion and Ignorance can be destroyed immediately by the shining light of Faith. Have this Faith; know it for certain that there is infinite strength within you. The mind and the senses are all your servants; without your consent they have not the power to make the least movement. They are alive through the life-force which you supply to them, and all the efforts they make are based on your strength. Through mistake you have come

to regard yourself as their servant, you have lost the memory of your Real Self, that is why you have fallen to this deplorable state. Stand firm on the Self, then you will find yourself to be possessed of infinite strength.

Even though covered under the sheet (of Delusion), the Self goes on acting, but being covered by Delusion that action of it goes on increasing Delusion, thus the power is illspent and wasted. Taking the sword of Faith, of firm belief, in your hand, tear off this covering sheet. Then observe that within you is constantly burning the fire of Knowledge which will give you Supreme Peace. It is only covered by a heap of ashes. Disbelief and forgetfulness of Self constitute this heap of ashes. Removing this heap of ashes, stir the fire into a blaze, then thread by thread the entire sheet of Delusion will be consumed by that fire. You will then have a peep into the infinite strength of the soul.

Remember: the four main gates (or outlets) through which the infinite strength of the soul manifests itself are Firm Conviction, Reverence, Faith and Remembrance of Self. Take refuge in them—adopt them to your life for shelter.

Realize your True Self.

Feel as if an infinite ocean of eternal existence, perfect consciousness and absolute bliss is advancing towards you and that you are completely submerged in it—have gone so deep into it that

you have lost your identity and become part of that ocean. That nothing is left before or without you except *Sat*, *Chit* and *Ānanda* (Truth, Knowledge and Bliss). Now give up all mental effort and remain in that vacant mood till another thought-current arises in your mind. And when a new thought arises, take it to be a mere ripple in that infinite ocean of thoughtlessness and dissolve it into the ocean.

* * * *

Be positive in your mind that whatever objects you perceive through the mind or the senses are all imaginary - though non-existent, they appear as real through the eye of your imagination. There is no substance in them. Then realize that this gross body does not exist; next take up the senses, and realize that even they do not exist; after that eliminate by force of your suggestion the mind and reason as well. When this state is reached, take leave of this faculty of suggestion itself. Eliminate that faculty itself through which you eliminated all other things. But remember, so long as this process of elimination goes on there must be some mental

effort behind this elimination; when this residual effort also ceases of itself, then alone you reach a stage where everything is truly renounced. This is the true nature of the Divinity. That which remains after the complete elimination of everything else, beyond which nothing exists which can eliminate it, that residual substance is *Sat* (Absolute Reality).

* * * *

Just as in the infinite space countless towns, villages, houses and rooms have been built, and the same space permeates without break all those created things, even so countless millions of universes stand projected in the one Divine Existence and the same Divine Existence permeates all those universes. Realizing this, feel that just as the space within a room is not different from the infinite space, similarly you are not different from the *Paramātmā* (Cosmic Soul). Viewed from the point of view of the *Paramātmā*, every object will appear as resting in the *Paramātmā*. Even so, detaching yourself from your limited personality, establish your identity with the *Paramātmā*, who is the support of all and pervades all,—then you will find that the entire creation rests in you,

and that you are equally present in all. When this is realized, you will find that even this body of yours rests in an infinitesimal portion of your infinite existence, and that within this tiny body resting in an infinitesimal fraction of you, it is you who stay. In truth, the body also is not different from you. For just as space stands enclosed within the four walls of a house built in space, and the walls themselves are built in space and of space in conjunction with the four other elements, which are nothing but products of space, similarly it is you who permeate the whole world which stands projected within you, and which has come into existence through you in conjunction with *Prakṛti* (Primordial Matter), which itself owes its existence to your thought and is made active through your presence. Realize this properly and, knowing everything to be the *Ātmā*, merge yourself completely in the *Ātmā*.

* * * *

Just as in a dream the dreamer, the objects seen in the dream and the act of dreaming are nothing apart from you,—you are the dreamer, the dreamt as well as the act of dreaming,—even so the whole universe, its seer and the act

of seeing, all these is the *Paramātmā*, with whom you are absolutely identical. Realizing this, merge yourself entirely in the *Paramātmā*.

* * * *

Be assured in your mind that you are all-bliss, and that there can never be any diminution in the fund of your joy. No one possesses the power to interfere with your joy or put an end to it. Realize that your state of being is interminable, and none possesses the power to shake it. Death itself cannot exterminate you; for it owes its existence to you. The state of your being is uninterrupted, interminable, imperishable and eternal. You do not die with the death of your body. Realize that you are consciousness itself, eternal consciousness. No one can obstruct your consciousness. All beings derive their conciousness from you. This consciousness of yours is unlimited and knows no break. Be assured in your mind that you are a free soul. The allurements of maya cannot bind you. No one can ever bring you under subjection. Even in the dark dungeons of the gaol you are free. The thickest of walls cannot interfere with your freedom, your liberation. Be positive in your mind that you are the Master—and the

intellect, the mind, the senses and the body, all these are your slaves. You can control and subdue them, but they cannot exercise any power over you. You forget your strength and your true character, therefore you imagine yourself to be under the subjection of mind and the senses. Recognize this character and strength, and you will at once find that you are the Master and that they are your followers and slaves ready to work at your bidding. Thus recognize yourself to be all-bliss, all-truth and all-consciousness, a free soul and Master. Your spiritual being is undoubtedly of this nature. In the state of the body and the mind, no one is Master and free; none can in that state claim to be all-bliss, all-truth and all-knowledge. To imagine that you are so even in this last state is a mark of ignorance and pride. To imagine that you are not so even in the state of the soul is also ignorance. When you have actually realized that state and when there is no longer any question whether you should believe like that or not, then alone you can be understood to have realized the Self. For, really speaking, you *are* of this nature.

You are the Soul.

Consider who you really are. The body which you imagine to be your own self and referring to which you very often say, "I am happy, I am unhappy, I have been taken ill, I am hale and hearty", and so on—are you really this body ? Try to recall what was the shape and form of this body when it was a mere child, what transformation it underwent in youth, and see how completely it is changed now in its old age. One who happened to see this body in its childhood

will fail to recognize it now. The tiny, soft hands and feet, the enchanting face, the milk-white teeth, and the soft, jet-black curly hair of those days have no affinity whatsoever with the humpbacked form, the wrinkled skin, the silvery hair, the shrivelled face, and the unsightly appearance of today. The body you possessed in childhood, in fact, died long ago; no trace of it is left in the present body. Are you, then, this ever-changing body ? No, you are not the body. You are that which is equally cognizant of all the three states through which the body has passed—childhood, youth and old age. The body has undergone so many changes, but you are the same. The body is insentient matter, while you are the conscious spirit. The body grows and decays; while you remain the same in all conditions. The body takes birth and dies, but you remain eternally in the same state of existence. Then, why do you imagine yourself to be the same as the body ? Why do you identify yourself with the honour or dishonour, pleasure or pain, birth or death of the body ? Is it not really an error on your part to do so ?

* * * *

Now, tell me, are you the name with which you have associated yourself ? As soon as you are

called by this name you respond even while you are asleep ! If the name is abused, you burst into tears through grief and resentment, your blood begins to boil through indignation. But just consider, are you really the name ? Can you tell me what name you bore when you were in the state of an embryo ? Did you possess this name when you saw the light, the name which you regard as your very self today ? No, you did not possess it then. Will you retain this name even in your next life ? No, you will not. Then, why do you identify yourself with your present name ? This is only an assumed title which is transient and can be changed at will. Then why do you take the praise or censure of this name as your own praise or censure, and why are you agreeably or disagreeably affected by the same ? Is this not another error on your part ?

* * * *

Well, do you consider yourself to be any of the sense-organs, such as the eyes, the ears, the nose, the tongue or the palate, the skin, hands and feet and so on. If so, does your life come to an end when your eyes lose their vision, your ears lose the power of hearing, your nose is amputated or your hands and feet are mutilated ?

No, you do not die by losing any of these organs or limbs. Then, how can you be the same as the senses? You are the perceiver and knower of the senses and their activities; as also of their sound and unsound condition. Is it not, then, a mistake on your part to imagine that you are the senses?

* * * *

Now, you will very likely say you are the mind. But just ponder before you say so; when the mind is crowded by diverse thoughts, don't you cognize those thoughts? If you do not cognize them, how can you say, 'such and such a thought came to my mind this moment,' and if you cognize them, know it for certain that the cognizer is different from the thing cognized. The mind gets lost in the state of deep sleep, but you persist there even in that state, because when you wake up, you say, 'I enjoyed a sound sleep'. The mind wanders here and there, but you remain fixed where you are and observe every one of its movements, and know all its secrets. Hence you are not the mind. You are the seer of the mind. Thus, it is nothing but an error on your part to imagine that you are the mind.

* * * *

You are not the intellect either. Just as you cognize every movement of the mind, you also cognize every phase of the intellect, every one of its activities, the changes it undergoes, its sublimity or depravity, its purity or impurity, and its right and wrong judgments. All these things are adventitious to the intellect; they come and go and are also subject to growth and decline, but you are always busy watching its movements. That is why you are found saying: "My reason failed me and my judgment had got warped at that moment; the impurity of my intellect has now been washed away through the influence of *Satsanga* (noble company)." How is it, then, that instead of recognizing yourself to be the seer of the intellect you regard yourself to be the intellect itself? This is nothing but an error on your part.

* * * *

You are not even the ego. Should you have referred to yourself as 'I' while established in the *Ātmā*, your real Self, that would have been perfectly all right; but instead of this you assert your ego while identifying yourself with the totality of body, senses, mind and intellect. In fact, you

are a seer even of this ego. Therefore, you say, "I said this through mistake out of egoism."

* * * *

You are likewise not identical with the vital airs. You are a witness of the function of these vital airs. You inspire and inform every movement of these vital airs. The vital airs have their seat in you—you are their support, their sustainer. You are not the same as these vital airs.

* * * *

Have you not realized now that you are not the body, the name, the senses, the mind, the intellect, or the ego, nor are you the vital airs? You are the Pure, Enlightened, Eternal, Conscious and Blissful Self. You are not destroyed when the body is destroyed, neither are you created anew when the body is created. The glorification or vilification of your name cannot glorify or vilify you. You are eternally changeless. None can abuse or insult you, nor can anyone kill or injure you. You remain eternally and unshakably poised in your self. Try to realize this and remain unmoved by the polarities of worldly existence. This poise in the Self is your real, permanent state of existence. The fulfilment of your life

consists in attaining this state, nay, in realizing this eternal state of your being. The moment you come to realize your identity you will be transformed into a *Mahātmā*, a noble soul. Depravity of soul lies in identifying the Self with name, form, senses, mind, etc.; and nobility of soul or Mahātmāship consists in seeing the soul unshakably established in its great identity.

* * * *

This Mahātmāship is not attained merely by being able to read and write the above lines, or by cultivating the art of speaking. Even a parrot can repeat things by rote. Every student of *Vedānta* knows these things by heart, but of what avail is this knowledge to him ? True knowledge is that in which there is complete cessation of identification and attachment with the body, mind, etc., and in which the soul does not regard the gain or loss of these things as its own gain or loss and remains eternally unshaken in its true state of being.

* * * *

We learn only to repeat things by rote and begin to assume the role of a teacher without reducing those lessons to practice, without moulding

our lives according to those lessons. We are anxious to be called full-fledged Mahātmās, to receive homage from others by assuming the role of a *Mahātmā*, but we do not really wish to acquire the qualifications of a true *Mahātmā*. That is why identifying ourselves with a particular creed or doctrine we remain mere teachers, as helpless as any ordinary creature, devoid of any spiritual culture, under the thraldom of worldly attachments, without any internal peace and tossed by the cross-currents of pleasure and pain. Even at the time we proceed to analyse the true nature of the soul (Ātmā) as altogether distinct from the body, mind or speech, it will be found on deeper examination that we are not above the physical and mental planes, and that identifying ourselves with the pleasure and pain, honour and dishonour of our mind and body, we are being swept away by the mental currents of joy and sorrow. This is, indeed, a deplorable condition. Guard yourself against this situation; steer clear of it; try to rise above it. This is the mission of your life; this is the only spiritual discipline you ought to pursue with diligence. Try to be a practicant in the true sense of the term, rather than an accomplished *Mahātmā*, only in name.



Turn faithfully to God.

Do not despair; firmly hold to the belief that the propitious hand of God is constantly over your head and is shading you. Take to the practice of ***Bhajana***, then you will be able directly to perceive that protecting hand, and realizing yourself to be protected by the power of One who is so Great and Mighty, you will begin to dance in sheer joy.

* * * *

Look, look, He is smiling and calling you; He has come very near you; very, very near you;

now if you desire, you may touch Him. Catch hold of Him ! O unlucky soul, why are you so tardy ? You do not believe it, that is why you are deprived of the privilege (of catching Him).

* * * *

You regard these to be nothing but idle sentiments, creations of the fancy, empty, meaningless words ! O, the pity of it ! This is how you are being deceived ! Try, even but once, believing with a full heart that this is true !

* * * *

The child in distress cries; it calls loudly for the mother; the mother comes as soon as she hears the loving and affectionate call of the child. When the mother is at a distance, she may not even hear the call ; but this Mother of yours, the embodiment of ***Sat, Chit*** and ***Ānanda,*** constantly stays with you. Whenever you call for Her, you will get a response. Learn how to call loudly for Her ! Call for Her, call for Her !

* * * *

Do you ask, how you should call ? Call just as a child, wholly dependent on the mother, calls

with full confidence in her. You know, really speaking, how to call; but you have no faith, that is why you fail to make the attempt.

* * * *

Have faith. Fill the heart with softness, simplicity and confidence. Then, raise the cry. Your call will not go in vain.

* * * *

It was Draupadī who raised a real cry; the Lord of elephants raised a cry. Even today people may be raising cries and getting response just as Draupadī and the Lord of elephants did. You also raise a similar cry—you will find there will be a response.

* * * *

But do not expect—in fact, give up the very idea—that God, who is omniscient, who is your dearest friend, will carry out what you may desire, and allow you to go to a deeper state of degradation.

* * * *

The child runs to catch the fire; meeting with an obstruction on the way it weeps. It raises a

plaintive wail for the mother, the mother hurries to the place, but she does not allow the child to proceed towards the fire. She removes the child to a distance from the fire, and the latter if it does not forget the fire may, in its ignorance, weep all the more. It feels extremely grieved. The mother does not care for its weeping but at the same time she cannot bear to see the child grieve for anything. She makes a sound indicating kisses to the child, tries to pacify it, and hiding it under the folds of her upper garment removes the bodice and begins to give the child a suck of her nectar-like milk.

* * * *

Thus, raise a wail for the Lord and He will come. He will take you up to His bosom and satisfy you with the stream of nectar from His heart. That stream of nectar will be so sweet that though fully satisfied yourself, you will crave all the more for it. This constant craving, even though the state of everlasting satisfaction is reached through Divine Love, is what is called ***Bhakti***. This is the supreme object of the devotee, in comparison to which he holds lightly even the state of ***Mokṣa***, or beatitude.

Ever Cling to God.

A believer in God, in the real sense of the term, is only he whose belief remains unshaken even in the midst of difficulties. He who sees Divine Grace only in prosperity, and not in adversity, is not a true believer.

* * * *

The adversity of one, who instead of losing patience clings to his faith in Divine Grace and does not deviate in the least from the path of Truth, is very soon transformed into prosperity. Under no circumstances, he is troubled by sorrow and anguish.

He who sees the working of Divine Grace even amidst adversity and troubles is alone truly qualified for Divine Grace.

* * * *

Seek nothing from anybody; people will, then, humbly follow your footsteps to supply you all that you may require. Seek not honour, honour will come to you unasked. Seek not Heaven, the angels of Heaven will come with their celestial cars to take you to Heaven. But, even then, if you refuse them, God will appear before you and clasp you to His bosom.

The life of one who forgets God in the interest of one's pursuit of honour, fame and aggrandizement of self is sinful. And lower still is he, who forgetting God, engages himself in pursuit of wealth for the sake of physical comfort and enjoyment of the senses. Not even he who forgets God in the name of Dharma is stainless; for the Dharma which causes God to be forgotten can never be blameless. The relation between true Dharma and God is as close as the relation between body and life. A Dharma devoid of God is lifeless like a corpse.

* * * *

Repent not for the past, nor worry about the future. Mend only your present. Bend all your energies on the strength of Divine Grace, and with courage, hope, faith, diligence, forbearance and wisdom, to rectify the present. The future will, then, get automatically rectified.

He, who without caring to mend the present, sees dreams of future happiness and weeps for the past, has nothing but tears of sorrow in his share.

* * * *

Do not get puffed up with pride when you gain some worldly object. In every sphere, there are greater and greater things than you can dream of. Holding yourself to be no more than a speck on earth treat all with respect and humility. Then alone the true path will be opened before you. He who is blinded by pride is wandering on the wrong path.

Treat all with honour and respect, try to do good to all; constantly think of rendering happiness to all. Then your own good and your own happiness will follow as a matter of course.

Get Merged in God.

Show compassion to all, regard the suffering of others to be your own suffering; feel happy through the happiness of others; but guard yourself against the growth of attachment and egoism.

* * * *

Just as pleasure or pain experienced by any part of the body is shared equally by the entire

body, even so share with every living creature its joys and sorrows, pleasure and pain. Merge your identity in the whole.

* * * *

Look upon your own body as belonging to another, and the bodies of others as your own; then alone you will be able to share the joys and sorrows of others, then alone you will be able to sacrifice your all for the sake of others.

* * * *

Just as a worldly man forsakes his parents, friends, kinsmen, wife, children, religion and even God Himself for the sake of his own petty self (*viz*, his body and bodily enjoyments) even so lay down gladly and willingly your life and all your physical comforts for the sake of God, embodied as the Universe, and religion, consisting in the service of the Universal Soul. Regard the Universal Soul to be your own soul and the Universe to be your body; but beware of attachment and egoism even here. Whatever you do, do it out of true love, love which is not actuated by self-interest but which is thoroughly disinterested and God-inspired. Let your self-

interest consist solely in universal love inspired by God.

* * * *

Treat every creature as you treat your own self; even if you are harmed by anybody, do not wish harm to him in return. When the tongue is bitten by the teeth or the right toe strikes against your left ankle and hurts it, do you rouse yourself up to pull out the teeth or inflict a counter-injury on the right toe? You know that the tongue as well as the teeth, the toe as well as the ankle belong to you. You will not be prepared to punish and thereby inflict pain on the teeth or the toe in return. For, whatever fresh pain will be inflicted will be your own pain and suffering. Even so, when you will behold your own self in all, you will not be able to harm any creature—not even the person who wrongs you, or ill-treats you. Of course, once the tongue is bitten or the right toe strikes against the left ankle, you become careful that the mistake is not repeated. Even so, without any sense of retaliation or doing harm to your persecutor, you should certainly try to restrain him through your elevated

conduct so that there may be no repetition of the error.

* * * *

Mind you, one harbours the spirit of retaliation or counter-injury only in relation to those with whom one does not identify oneself, not in relation to those whom one regards as one's own. When you begin to regard the Universe as your own self, you will no longer have this spirit of retaliation in you. Of course, when a limb of your body gets diseased and shows signs of putrefaction which threatens to poison the whole system, it may become necessary to perform an operation to restore health to the body through removal of putrid matter; similarly, you may be called upon to perform an operation on any part of the collective body in the interest of that body itself. But even in that case you must have the same feeling as when the operation is performed on your own body. You must remember that occasions for such an operation will be few and far between if your own conduct is always right and pure.

Discover God's Grace in All Circumstances.

Do not get perplexed in the face of suffering. It is for your own good that sufferings come to you. Know every suffering to be nothing but the fruit of some action done by you in the past. When you go through suffering you work out the effect of that *Karma*, and thus freed from its bondage you become pure. The great warrior Bhīṣma, at the time of his parting from the body, called out all his past Karmas and said, "If there is any *Karma* still left to be worked out, let it come and impose its fruit on me." Therefore, whatever suffering may come to you, bear it patiently and peacefully, and feel happy in mind with the knowledge that you have worked out the *Karma*, which has been best for you.

* * * *

Every incident which brings you either happiness or suffering is ordained by God, and He, being supremely compassionate, cannot prescribe anything which is not full of blessings for you. Therefore, rejoice in your suffering knowing it to have been ordained by God. Know it for certain that it is only for your good that God has sent this suffering to you.

* * * *

Realize it clearly that a sense of want, a consciousness of opposition, is what is called suffering. Now, this sense of want or of opposition originates from your own thought due to your sentiments of attraction and repulsion. If there is no attraction or repulsion, no love or hatred, it is possible to maintain under all circumstances a state of undisturbed joy. Realizing that whatever happens in the world is nothing but the sport of God, His play, do not cherish any attraction or attachment, and hatred or hostility to anything and thus renounce all mental opposition or sense of want. You will find suffering, whatever its nature may be, will no more produce any effect on you.

* * * *

Non-acquirement or destruction of objects liked, or craved for, by the mind, is called sorrow or suffering. Through the acquisition of worldly objects the mind gets entangled in such objects. That is why the seeker of liberation deliberately renounces objects of worldly happiness like wealth, honour, prosperity, fame, etc. If you lack these objects, or once being in possession lose them, know that through this loss you have been freed from the strong, closely woven net

of suffering. Let not such loss cause you any pain or sorrow.

* * * *

Worldly pleasure and pain centre round your name and form; you are the soul itself; you are neither the body, nor the name. You are for ever only a witness to all states of pleasure and pain. The days of childhood you have seen, as well as the days of youth, and now you are gathering the experiences of old age. The states have changed but you, the witness or the observer of the states, have remained the same, that is why you remember what you observed in the past. Now, make up your mind that you are not the enjoyer, you are only a witness (of the different states). You are wholly beyond pleasure and pain, you are untainted by them. In the state of the soul you are in possession of an unbroken joy. The soul is never rendered poorer by loss of wealth, it is neither dishonoured nor defamed, neither does it get ill nor die. Under all circumstances it remains the same. Then, why do you call incidents connected with your name and form by the term sorrow, and feel pain therefrom? Give up this stupidity, and feel an unbroken joy under all circumstances. Pain or

sorrow can never come near you. It comes because you accept it, and give it a place. Give up accepting it, then no sorrow will ever visit you.

* * * *

Offer your all—body, mind and wealth—to God; you are, in fact, not their owner. God is their owner. You have usurped ownership over them, and have got attached to them, that is why you suffer. Withdrawing all your attachments from the objects of the world devote them all to the feet of God; what you call your own, offer them all to God. Let Him make whatever use He likes of His own things—let Him either preserve them, or destroy them. Why do you feel adversely affected, if they are destroyed? Having offered them to God, give up all cares and merge yourself in joy.

* * * *

Remember: there is no distinction between the decree of Providence and Providence Itself. He is both the sport and the Sporter. Realizing this supreme secret, recognize and grasp Him appearing under all circumstances as the decree of Providence. Then, there will be joy and joy alone.



Go Ahead with God Overhead.

Why do you worry at all thinking about yourself? The function of thinking all about you lies with Him, and Him alone who protected you in the womb of the mother and created milk in the mother's breast in anticipation of your birth, so that you may get nourishment immediately on your appearance on earth. Your part lies only in thinking constantly of Him with whole mind and whole heart.

* * * *

Devote the mind to His remembrance, and the senses to His service, perform every single action of life only for His service. But remember, actions done in the spirit of His service are

invariably good in character. His service cannot be done through any evil action. Good and virtuous action done for the service of God is what is called *Sadāchāra* (right conduct).

* * * *

Man's true life and existence lies in *Sadāchāra* (right conduct). A man devoid of *Sadāchāra* is like a dead man although alive. However beautiful he may be in external appearance, however gorgeously he may adorn the body with ornaments and accoutrements, if he is devoid of *Sadāchāra*, all that is worth nothing. The beautifying of the body by a man without *Sadāchāra* makes him like a golden pitcher filled with poison.

* * * *

Constantly try to fill the heart with good and virtuous qualities, and devote all your efforts to the performance of good and virtuous action. These qualities and actions, again, should be acquired and performed only as means of worship of the Lord. If instead you make the mistake of regarding worldly recognition, honour and fame which you get in lieu of them as the fruit of such acquirement of virtuous qualities and

performance of virtuous deeds, then, remember, your downfall will be very speedy. All your virtues and meritorious actions will vanish in no time. The Divine qualities stay only on the support of God, and never on worldly honour, recognition, or prestige.

* * * *

The difficulties of the world cannot form a stumbling block in the path of a person whose goal of life is God and who sticks to this goal with determination. His path becomes smooth through the grace of God. If any thorn remains anywhere in the path, it gets as soft as the thread of velvet the moment he lays his step on it. On appearing before him, no difficulty will remain in the shape of a difficulty, but on the contrary will transform itself into an ally and helper.

* * * *

While determining the goal of your life, study the lives of saints and devotees who have realized God. That will help you in chalking out the goal and will supply you with strength, support and subsistence to advance towards it.

* * * *

Remember, through mere words you will make no advance in the journey, a mere stage-actor also gives expression to the highest of sentiments. Those who take up the parts of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the old warrior Bhīṣma, Śankarāchārya or Buddha on the stage, leave nothing unsaid, they speak out great things about knowledge, renunciation, devotion, etc., but what does it avail? Till life is purified—till those ideas and sentiments become part and parcel of life—their utterance means no more than acting in a theatrical performance. If such acting brings you honour and fame, do not be led by them to forget your actual spiritual state. Men of the world, fascinated by your words, may be misled, but you cannot deceive God, who is seated within your heart and knows everything about you. God will be pleased only by the truthfulness and spiritual height of your life—not by your words!

* * * *

Even if you succeed in realizing some amount of purity and truthfulness in life, do not feel satisfied so long as you detect even a particle of impurity or a small remnant of evil, within the heart. Never regard yourself to be a virtuous man, a Mahātmā or a devotee so long as evil or

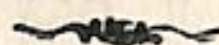
impurity persists within you. If others address you as such, then, if possible, explain your true condition to them; if that is not possible, ignore them altogether. If you do not do this, and make the mistake of regarding yourself to have become great, then remember, the consequences would be very severe, and ruin will soon stare you in the face.

* * * *

Go on making steady progress, do not stop, do not pride yourself over your spiritual attainments. So long as you detect even the slightest trace of egoism, sense of *Moha* or attachment within you, do not slacken your efforts, do not allow your *Sādhanā* to have even the slightest rest.

* * * *

Do not reproach others, nor have a bad opinion about anyone. You should find no time to do anything else than regulating your own life, and scrutinizing your own internal condition. If you cannot restrain yourself from looking at others, try to see only their virtues, their good deeds and their good disposition and manners.



How to get your Spiritual welfare Assured ?

True Reality and the *Paramātmā* are one. Though unqualified, He is yet qualified; though Formless, He yet possesses a Form. Similarly though qualified, He is yet unqualified; and though possessing a Form, He is yet Formless. Nothing can be said about Him and yet all that is said refers to Him. Of course, whatever is said does not describe Him fully. That which is perfect can in no way be described. Yet the *Paramātmā* is not imperfect in any state; therefore, even an incomplete description of Him becomes a description of the perfect inasmuch as even His parts are perfect or equal to the whole. Seers, saints and devotees worshipped this very *Paramātmā* through various sentiments and the *Paramātmā* accepted the worship of them all through those very sentiments.

* * * *

The Supreme God, the embodiment of *Sat* (Truth), *Chit* (Knowledge) and *Ānanda* (Bliss) is the Supreme Reality. Though beyond the Guṇas, He is yet full of the Guṇas; though beyond the universe, He yet permeates the universe. He pervades all, and all is pervaded by Him, *viz*, the whole of this creation, mobile as well as immobile, rests on Him. The same

Supreme Lord, who is consolidated knowledge and bliss, manifests Himself variously as Brahmā, Mahādeva, Mahāviṣṇu, Mahāśakti, the Lord of Sāketa (transcendent Ayodhyā), i.e., Śrī Rāma, the abode of infinite bliss, and as the Lord of Goloka, *viz*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the ocean of ambrosial Beauty. All these various forms are true and eternal. Although appearing as many they are essentially one for all time.

* * * *

The aspirant or devotee adopts for his worship as something essential one of these or any other Form of the Lord according to his taste or sentiment; and it is quite in the fitness of things that he does so. It is not possible to worship God through many Forms at one and the same time. To compose and concentrate the restless mind, it is necessary to worship only one Form. Through worship of many Forms, the fickleness and changeability of the mind is liable to increase. That is why a wise 'Sadguru' who possesses Divine vision, takes note of the disciple's aptitude, attainments, qualifications and the results likely to be achieved by him, and instructs the latter in one particular form of worship, gives him a suitable *mantra* (sacred formula) through which he may adore the object of his worship. At the

same time he tells the disciple that the God in whose worship he has been initiated is the only God, and that it is the same God who is worshipped through various Names and Forms by different people in different climes and different ages. None of these Forms is different in essence from the God you are worshipping, and when there is no difference the question of superiority and inferiority in relation to them cannot arise. Go on worshipping the Form you have adopted but do not hate the Forms which are worshipped by others, nor regard them as inferior in any way. If you do so, you will be hating your own God and lowering Him in your estimation inasmuch as it is the same God, the object of your worship, who is being worshipped by others through other Forms. Should you take it into your head that the Forms worshipped by others are different from your God, you will be circumscribing and thereby belittling your own God and reducing Him to the position of one among many Gods. He will no longer remain the Supreme God but will be reduced to the position of an inferior God like the regional gods. Through such "small" and "finite" God, you cannot hope to reach the Infinite. Thus through

your own fault you will be deprived of the vision of the Supreme God. Therefore, cultivate exclusive devotion to the object of your worship, but at the same time honour other Forms as well, regarding them to be so many manifestations of your own God. True exclusiveness of devotion lies in regarding the other Forms as so many different manifestations of the God you worship. To do otherwise is to admit another God which is nothing short of infidelity on the part of an exclusive devotee.

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It is reported that in the name of exclusiveness of devotion the doctrine is being preached that devotees of Śrī Rāma should not utter the name of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and correspondingly the devotees of Śrī Kṛṣṇa should not utter the name of Śrī Rāma; for if they do so they will incur a sin. On this very ground it is urged that the famous *mantra* of the Upaniṣad—

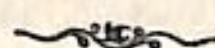
हरे राम हरे राम राम राम हरे हरे ।
हरे कृष्ण हरे कृष्ण कृष्ण कृष्ण हरे हरे ॥

—should not be chanted in its entirety. In the humble opinion of "Śiva" to propagate this view itself is wrong and sinful. The Śāstras

proclaim that all the different Names belong to the same God. It has been regarded as a spiritual crime (नामापराध) to make any distinction between the Names of Śiva and Viṣṇu. 'Viṣṇu is the very heart of Śiva and Śiva the heart of Viṣṇu' is a famous declaration of the Śāstras. When it is a crime to make any distinction between even Śiva and Viṣṇu, the so-called devotees of Viṣṇu cannot perpetrate a greater crime against God than to recognize essential differences among the conceptions of Viṣṇu, Hari, Rāma, Kṛṣṇa and Nārāyaṇa and to declare it a sin for the worshipper of one Form to mutter and chant the name of another and thus create a sense of distinction in the minds of aspirants among the eternally true and pure Forms and Names of the same God.

* * * *

In all humility and with great emphasis "Śiva" requests all to shake off such a belief and not to repose faith in the words of a preacher who may try to beguile them and create doubt in their minds. Go on chanting with the utmost faith and reverence the Names of God regarding them all to be Names of the same God. Your spiritual welfare will thus be assured.



Only Purity breeds a Powerful Will.

God is Truth. Where there is truth, there is no fear. Truth is the goal of human life as well as the means of attaining it; hence Truth alone should be resorted to. Truth in thought, truth in dealings, truth in word and truth in deed,—truth should be embraced by every part of your being.

* * * *

Never think for a moment that harm will come to you if you make Truth the governing principle of your life. Truth can never lead to harm. Your reason, which is dominated by untruth, tries to delude you into the belief that truth will bring harm to you. Practise truth and your intellect will be purified thereby.

* * * *

Only that truth is beautiful which is conducive to the well-being of all. And truth, really speaking, is never opposed to one's interests. Truth which involves injury to one's best interests is no truth at all.

* * * *

He who has installed truth in his mind has God revealed in his mind. He who is truthful in speech, his words are as true as an oracle. He who is truthful in his dealings, his dealings have the capacity to lead all to truth.

* * * *

By meditating on Truth, undertaking a vow of Truth, contemplating on Truth, seeking for Truth, experimenting with Truth, speaking Truth, and dwelling repeatedly on the glory of Truth, respect for Truth is generated. And he alone can resort to Truth, who has respect for Truth.

* * * *

A votary of Truth has no fear even of death; he clings to Truth with leech-like tenacity. Harischandra and Yudhiṣṭhira are remembered and extolled for their truthfulness even to this day. It should be borne in mind that he who adores Truth is always protected by Truth.

It is possible a truthful man may be held in contempt in a society of liars, he may be maligned and dubbed a fool; but a votary of truth should not be afraid of such things. This is only an elementary test of his devotion to truth. A truthful man has to undergo fiery ordeals and he

alone is a real votary of Truth who is able to uphold Truth even when put to such ordeals.

* * * *

Be merciful to those who are poor, miserable, afflicted, ailing, helpless, suffering from want or disabled in body. Incessantly go on developing this feeling of compassion. Try to place yourself in their position mentally and imagine how anxiously you would have awaited help from others had you been in their position. Therefore try to avert others' calamities in the same way as you are alert to avert your own calamities.

He who feels true commiseration for the poor and the miserable and tries to save them from trouble easily secures the sympathy and help of others in his own adversity.

* * * *

As the feeling of compassion and the spirit of service get firmly rooted and when your will-power is fully wedded to mercy and the spirit of service, Divine Grace will descend on the individual whom you will seek to oblige and serve and necessary services will be automatically rendered to him through some source or other. Your intention alone will suffice to alleviate his suffering.

Then your will alone will be able to alleviate the suffering of the whole creation. By dint of your will-power God Himself will avert the calamity of the being in respect of whom you will entertain but for once the idea that his calamity may be averted. When your will alone will thus acquire the efficacy of averting others' calamities, it goes without saying that you will be rid of all suffering yourself.

* * * *

There are lots of men who serve the poor and the afflicted, but such power is lacking in them. The main reason for this lies in the fact that the majority among them consists of those who are not actuated by the pure motive of alleviating the suffering of the poor and the miserable. They have in their mind a desire for personal gain lurking somewhere behind the motive of alleviating the suffering of the poor and the miserable. If no other desire, the desire for honour and praise is almost invariably present in such cases. That is why the motive of these people is not always pure and that is why their will-power is not fully wedded to compassion and the spirit of service.



Stick to Sādhanā.

However much you may sermonize on equanimity and however glibly you may discuss the state of supreme bliss unperturbed by worldly pleasures and pains, all this is of no avail to you so long as your heart does not overflow with joy. The

reputation of being a wealthy man only adds to one's trouble. What one should do, therefore, is to make oneself really wealthy, no matter if the world regards one as a pauper.

* * * *

Make haste to achieve your purpose: life is ebbing fast. If you spend your whole life-time in exhorting others, neither will this be conducive to your own good nor will mere eloquence relieve the distress of others. What you should do in the first instance is to acquire spiritual wealth; then only should you distribute it. What will you distribute if you have got nothing to distribute?

* * * *

Always exercise strict vigilance over your mind. Remember: you stand precisely where your mind is. No matter whether you reside in a sanctuary or in a forest, if your mind is wandering in a workshop or a market-place, you are also there. He alone resides in a temple, whose mind has become a dwelling-place for the Lord; while one who nourishes thoughts of sensual enjoyments in one's mind is, truly speaking, a man of the world.

* * * *

Withdraw your mind from sense-objects and fix it on the Lord, or behold an image of the Lord in every object towards which you feel attracted. Watch the movements of your mind every moment. Be an onlooker of your mind. The face of your mind will then be automatically turned towards the Lord.

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Never enter into polemics. Do not engage in a wordy strife, Do not entertain the motive of vanquishing others. Continue to do your own work. Let not your programme of ***Bhajan***, meditation, remembrance and worship suffer on any account. If you gain the upper hand in a controversy, your triumph will only serve to swell your pride. At least your mind will be turned aside for the time being from the Lord and that will mean no inconsiderable loss to you.

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Never try to widen the circle of your friends and acquaintances; go on with your ***Bhajan*** silently. Reputation will increase your botheration, widen your responsibility and stand in the way of your ***Bhajan***. Nay, you will begin to receive honour and homage and, should your mind accept and

relish such honour, worship or homage, you would certainly be digging a grave for your spiritual life. Speak little, hear little, see little and meet as few people as possible. Do all this only where it is absolutely necessary. Do not spend even a minute or second more than is necessary in these activities.

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Remain in your house as if you were a guest or a stranger; never look upon anything as your own. Hesitate to take service from others; be very careful in your dealings with those you come in contact with. Wish well of all. Take care that you do not become instrumental in inflicting pain on others. Do not increase the relation of I and mine. Remember that a guest must needs leave his temporary residence one day.

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Never be afraid of anything unwelcome befalling you except sin. You should be afraid only of placing others in an awkward position, constraining others to some act, inflicting pain on others, injuring others' interests, receiving homage from others, taking service from others, allowing others

to take the dust of your feet, hearing eulogy from others and, lastly, of forgetting the Lord.

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Always be watchful that you may not forget the Lord even for a moment. Be careful that He may continue to dwell in your mind, and be the object of your speech and sight. You may commit other blunders, but never the blunder of forgetting the Lord.

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Never rest satisfied with your *Sadhana*. Move on. Push forward. Take stock of how much you advance. Never allow your progress to be retarded. Never stop short of the goal. Never allow the mind even to conceive of retracing your steps.

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Have unflinching faith in the Lord: He is supremely kind to you. He is always by your side. His protecting hand is always extended over your head. You are under His direct supervision. He always looks after you personally. Never allow this faith to waver. In course of time the cherished goal of your life will be realized by obtaining a delicate touch of His blessed hand.



Pursue Piety.

Always carefully examine every nook and corner of your heart. Within that internal palace of yours, pillagers like egotism, lust, anger and greed lie so dexterously hidden that a superficial examination will not enable you to trace their existence there. But as soon as a favourable opportunity presents itself they reveal themselves and mercilessly rifle the store of your good qualities and noble thoughts and thus deprive you of the acquisitions of your lifetime.

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Never adopt a self-confident or careless attitude imagining yourself to have reached a stage which is above all fear. So long as these pillagers are not driven out lock, stock and barrel, go on striving to exterminate them. When discovered in their true colours, they will humbly approach you and appeal to your mercy for being allowed to stay as your friends or dutiful servants, but take care not to place any reliance on them on any

account whatsoever. The moment you trace them, close up with them for their overthrow.

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Try as far as possible not to associate willingly with people who are swayed by egotism, lust, anger or greed. Through their association your mind will be contaminated by evil thoughts and sentiments, and you will never receive any true help and right guidance from them.

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Never speak ill of others. Always bear in mind that by vilifying others you will defile your own tongue and make your thoughts impure. The person you speak ill of may develop enmity towards you and evil impressions will be imprinted on your mind.

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Unless it is absolutely necessary to do so, do not visit big men and government officers, or those whose ambition in life is to acquire honour and prestige. Such persons will never like to hear from you an honest expression of opinion. You will have to say ditto to what they may desire you to say and suppress or ignore your own

impartial views or convictions. They will resent an expression of honest opinion on your part which may contradict their own.

* * * *

Remember, those alone who are themselves evil-minded constantly make it their business to discover the weak points of others. For they require the shelter of others' evils to cover up their own. Pious and holy people try to discover only piety and holiness everywhere. They see nothing but piety in this world. Like the proverbial swan which can separate milk mixed with water, they see only the good points of others.

* * * *

What avails it, if one externally appears good to others through an assumed veneer of goodness or piety. So long as the heart is impure, so long as you cannot present a pure heart before the Lord residing within your heart, the show of goodness on your part will be as good as a pitcher of gold containing poison.

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Through the influence of your *Prarabdha* (past *Karma*) you may acquire a great name in the

world and people may begin to worship your feet. But what avails it ? So long as you carry an impure heart within you, so long as you feel tempted to commit acts of sin in secret, you can never escape from anguish, distress, or the sufferings of hell.

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To perpetrate an objectionable act in the name of *Jñāna* (Knowledge) or *Bhakti* (Devotion) is nothing but a loathsome attempt to deceive God Himself. Far better than these are those who commit such acts but are known as sinners. These last do not bring any stigma to the fair names of *Jñāna* and *Bhakti*.

* * * *

Never burn with jealousy when you find another provided lavishly with bread and butter and take your food after offering a portion of it to the needy. To satisfy the needs of the needy and rejoice in the happiness of others constitutes real service to them. Wish well of all, render good to all, and be happy when you find that others are thriving.



Develop a pure Medium.

God exists. He is Absolute Existence, Pure Intelligence and Infinite Bliss. He is present everywhere at every time. Nevertheless, how is it that every one of us does not feel His presence? It is only because the Divine Essence is the purest of the pure and subtlest of the subtle. In

order to know and grasp that subtle principle we shall have to make the medium, *viz*, the body, the mind and the intellect, fit to receive that light. So long as the body is unclean, the mind is unsteady and impure, and the intellect is gross and indeterminate, it is not possible to obtain a true vision of God. Cleanse the body through penance, purity and good conduct. Purify and control the mind through intercourse with holy men, muttering the Divine Name and dwelling on the divine virtues of the Lord. And refine the intellect and make it one-pointed by meditating on the Divine Principle, which is the only indisputable Reality. This having been accomplished you will be able to realize God, to obtain a vision of the Lord, in no time.

That is why so much stress has been laid on purifying the medium. Efforts made to catch the Divine light through an impure medium do not give real joy. For an impure medium is unable to catch even the reflection of that which is exceedingly pure. Nonetheless you should go on striving unceasingly. The purer the medium becomes through constant and faithful endeavour, the fitter will it grow to catch the Divine reflection and then you will also begin to enjoy

your *Sādhanā*. The little pleasure that you derive in the beginning will stimulate in your heart the desire to have more and more of it and this desire will prove very helpful in accelerating the speed of your *Sādhanā*.

Remember, purity of the medium is supremely necessary for enthroning therein that Supreme Reality. You want to receive it in an impure medium and when you are unable to do so, you do not take into consideration the unripeness of the medium. On the other hand, you begin to entertain doubts about the Reality itself. Do not commit this fatal blunder. Apply yourself wholeheartedly to the task of purifying the body, mind and intellect through the practice of truthfulness, harmlessness, honesty, continence and non-acquisition of property and by resorting to bodily and mental purity, contentment, austere penance, study of sacred books, repeating the sacred Names of God and singing His praises and meditating on the Divine Essence. When the Lord will find the medium pure, clean and adorned with divine qualities, He will occupy it of His own accord. He resides there even now, though in a covert manner. Then the veil will be lifted and you will be able to feel His thrilling

presence through all your limbs and organs and thus fulfil your human existence.

So long as the medium does not acquire the requisite purity and ripeness it is very difficult even for an accomplished saint to transmit spiritual energy into the same. For transmission of energy into an impure and unripe medium is not an easy job. Even if one tries to transmit energy into such a medium, the same will rebound and return and, if it is sought to keep it forcibly there, the medium will not be able to bear the pressure of it and will begin to give way and the trouble will thus be increased. If, on the other hand, the energy stays in such a medium, there is every possibility of the energy not only going in vain but also yielding contrary results. Just as butter proves unwholesome for one who has a bad stomach or just as milk boiled in a copper vessel becomes poisonous, even so a valuable substance deposited in an unworthy receptacle not only loses its efficacy but acquires undesirable properties. Hence holy men do not impart something valuable to anyone till they are satisfied that the recipient is ripe to receive and retain it. Of course, it is necessary to have intercourse with holy men and depend on their good grace for

purifying and ripening the medium. Through the good grace of such holy men and by following their precepts the medium will be purified in no time and on the medium being purified they will find it easy to transmit spiritual energy into the same.

One should also not be misled to think that all holy men do or can transmit such energy. In the first place all holy men are not alike in their nature nor do they possess spiritual efficacy in an equal degree. There are some holy men who do not make use of their power even though they possess it, while there are others who try to utilize even their inadequate power. Of those, again, who try to make use of their power some possess this energy in such an unusual degree that they are easily able to purify by dint of their spiritual power even a partially unripe medium and transmit such energy into the same. While those whose power is not so highly developed can transmit the same even in a pure medium with great difficulty. In any case you should go on trying your level best to purify and ripen the medium. The Divine Energy will descend into a pure medium of its own accord.

First Reform Yourself.

Abandoning all thoughts of reforming and redeeming the world, reform and redeem yourself in the first instance. If you get reformed yourself, then know that an important member of society has been reformed. If this is not achieved, if higher thoughts and noble impulses are not garnered within your heart, if you are not able to make your actions free from the taint of opposing impulses like attraction and repulsion, and take upon yourself the task of reforming the world, then know it for certain that the world is not going to be reformed through your efforts. Never imagine that since you are a servant of the people devotedly engaged in their service, your personal character can be safely left out of consideration. If there is any blot or blemish in

your character, you can never really serve the people. Will you not employ in this service that very stuff which you actually possess ? You will place those very things before the world, will offer it only those materials that lie stored within you. You will naturally teach the world what you practise yourself. Thus if you are impure yourself, the world will never profit by your service.

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So long as your mental vision is warped by likes and dislikes it will never be possible for you to see things in their true colours. And without true knowledge of things, it will not be possible for you to determine what is conducive to the welfare of a particular individual. For that course alone will commend itself to you for which you have a liking or predilection. But quite likely, that course may not be the right course.

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If you are not reformed yourself and yet desire to reform the world, two things are bound to happen in that case. You will either begin to regard yourself as having reached an advanced

stage in spirituality—as a superior soul possessing the necessary qualifications to reform the world, and give yourself up to pride, or you will begin to play the hypocrite and practise dissimulation. In both ways you will be degrading yourself spiritually. Reformation of the world will be altogether out of the question under such circumstances.

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Pride will make others appear to you as much lower than you in the scale of spiritual evolution. The result will be that you will like to lord it over them, you will seek to assume their leadership and enlist them as your followers by bringing them under your banner. They on their part will resent your presumptuous behaviour. This will create bad blood between them and yourself; parties will be formed which will be dominated by rancorous feelings. Your energy as well as their's will be spent in trying to humiliate each other. You will thus lose your peace of mind, and forgetting in this mental unrest all about the reformation of the world you will have done a great harm to it instead.

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Know it for certain that any action, any effort that is conducive to the true welfare of the world will *ipso facto* conduce to your own welfare. But you can never do good to the world unless you have become good yourself. Therefore, reform yourself in the first instance. When you are thus reformed, you will no longer take upon yourself the responsibility of reforming the world. For then every action of yours will contribute to the reformation of the world. Your very existence in this world, your respiration, your eating, your drinking, your going to bed and waking from sleep and your daily transactions—all these will naturally contribute to the good of the world.

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So long as you entertain the idea that the world cannot be reformed without you, you will never be able to reform it. So long as you feel that you are superior, virtuous and exalted, while others are inferior, vicious and ignoble, you will never be able to do good to the world. So long as you wish that you may be able to do good to the world, the world should accept you as its leader, as the object of its worship and service, and honour and adore you, serve you and applaud

you, you can never do real good to the world. For the craving in your heart for leadership, for receiving homage and service from others, will give rise to such a weakness in you as will prevent you from speaking out the truth before the world. To whatever extent it may be, you will have to say things which are agreeable to them. You will always be afraid lest people may get displeased with you and their displeasure may deprive you of the services, homage, honour and respect they have been rendering to you.

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Remember: so long as you serve the public for the sake of honour and praise, or you feel flattered when you receive honour and applause in return for your services, there is lurking within your heart a thirst for honour and glory which will gradually divert you from service and make you inclined to play to the gallery. And when the idea of tickling popular fancy takes possession of your mind—when popularity becomes your object, you will have to abandon the idea of service altogether. You will then do only that which is pleasant to the taste of the people. For that alone will bring you the desired honour and glory. You will then refrain from activities that will

not directly contribute to your honour and glory, even if they are indispensable for public good, or for your own personal good. And you will engage in activities which will bring you honour and glory even if in your opinion they are injurious to public good. Thus your whole life will be transformed into a life full of hypocrisy and dissimulation.

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All this does not mean that you should give up public service itself. Render such service by all means, and as much as you can; but *pari passu* try to make yourself a fit instrument for such service. If you proceed to dust a neighbour's floor with a broom that is full of dirt, you will make the floor dirtier instead of cleaning it. The purer in heart you become, the fitter you will be for public service. Therefore, take particular care to purify your inner impulses, to improve and elevate your character and conduct, to give up prejudice and attachment, to renounce the insidious thirst for honour and glory. Then whatever you do will go to reform and redeem the world, even if at the time all your actions are governed by the spirit of renunciation.

Correct Yourself.

There are lacs of hearers, thousands of preachers, hundreds of those who have understood (what is to be done), but the actual practicant is very rare. A true man is only he (the last), and true gain is derived only by him who practises what he preaches.

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When you instruct yourself, then alone will your instruction prove to be of any use. What you desire to be practised by others, in the first instance practise it yourself. If you do not do so, your instructions will be no better than acting in a theatrical performance.

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There are men who play the roles of Hariśchandra, Prahlāda, Śankarāchārya and Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu in dramatic performances, but what do these actors gain except their wages? Through similar poor imitation and acting, you will gain nothing from the point of view of the soul. Therefore, give up acting, and take to sincere practice.

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This world is a show full of both good things and bad. The customer gets here whatever he seeks to purchase. Leaving what is bad, be you a customer only for what is good. You will then find only good things exhibited before you. In

a mart only such commodities are put on sale for which there may be a demand.

Bear in mind the maxim—the greatest of gain lies in remembrance of God and the greatest of loss lies in forgetting Him. According to this maxim, try as far as possible to carry on all activities of the world simultaneously with the practice of Divine remembrance.

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Do not allow your faith in God to be shaken; on the other hand, let it grow as much as it can. Faith is a great source of strength. Men of faith alone can attain victory over all internal elements and become wholly fearless.

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Do not be afraid of any man; be afraid of your own evil conduct, of the impurities of the heart and of lack of Faith in God. He who has lost Faith in God, know him to have met with his spiritual death.

If you are a recipient of any noble service from another, do not reproach that service by trying to pay it back through any act of service of your own. A truly noble service can never be paid back. Your duty in that case lies in rendering your benefactor sincere service with a

grateful heart, without any thought of exchange. Try with an honest heart that he does not feel any delicacy in accepting service from you, nor considers that what you are doing was in exchange for what had been done to you.

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When you have rendered any service to anybody, forget it; but when you have received any service from anybody, remember it. Forget when you go through any suffering yourself; but remember when you are yourself the cause of suffering to another. Forget whenever you do any good; but remember when you are the recipient of good. Forget when any evil is inflicted on you; but remember when you do any evil yourself.

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Do not advertise the evils of another, and neither discuss them nor remember them. Your supreme welfare lies in this. God is the knower of all hearts. He knows why and under what circumstances, an individual has performed a certain act, and it is He who will deal out the fruit of that action. Why do you interfere in the middle and give an exhibition of the bankruptcy of your intellect, and through your fancies, whether true or false go on gathering evils in your heart.

Obstacles on the Way

Speak as little as possible, speak only where it is unavoidable to speak; never hasten to offer unsolicited advice to anyone; when two persons are conversing, do not try to overhear or interrupt them. Do not be prodigal in speech. Always speak truthful, straight, wholesome and sweet words. Never attempt through your speech to deceive or put anyone on the wrong scent, to harm anyone or hurt anyone's feelings. Do not revile or backbite another. Devote all the time that is left to you after such frugal use of speech in muttering the Divine Name, in singing the glory of God.

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Try your level best to keep the mind engaged in the remembrance of God. The Lord exhorts us to fix our mind on Him, assuring us that all the obstacles in our way will then automatically disappear through His grace. Never wish harm to or hate another nor allow pride, sorrow or depression to enter your mind. Do not allow the mind to feel attracted towards a thing possessed by another. Cultivate the feeling of dispassion. Always remember God, depending on His grace; wish well to all; develop the sentiments of compassion, love

and sympathy. Do not try to detect the shortcomings of another; attempt to see God everywhere.

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Through the body, render service unto all as is their due; do not kill or injure any creature; steal not other's property; as far as possible avoid sexual intercourse. Abstain in any case from intercourse with any woman other than your wedded wife. Practise restraint of the senses, and try through your body to minister to the happiness of all, knowing God to be present in all.

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Do not consider yourself to be conversant with everything; do not give any opinion on a subject of which you have no knowledge. If it is necessary for you to know a thing, shake off all reserve and pride and learn it from one who has knowledge of the subject. Intimate knowledge of any subject whatsoever cannot be acquired without undergoing necessary training, to say nothing of spiritual knowledge. Therefore, do not make the mistake of regarding yourself to be an enlightened soul or a devotee merely after turning a few pages of the scriptures. For developing spiritual knowledge and devotion take up a course of discipline with faith and reverence.

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As far as possible be abstemious in sense-enjoyment; cultivate the spirit of contentment, make your life simple and pure; learn to keep the mind tranquil and cool. Regulate both your diet and pastime.

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Hatred, jealousy, enmity, hypocrisy, censoriousness and malice—these are great enemies in the domain of spiritual culture; always try to keep yourself free from these evils. Never aspire to be a preacher, lecturer, reformer, preceptor or leader. Try to imbue your life with truth, love, compassion, knowledge and devotion and continue to develop the spirit of self-denial and dispassion. The more you develop these sentiments, the more will the qualities of truth, love, etc., manifest themselves in your life.

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Luxury, vice, lethargy, carelessness, doubt, bigotry, wrangling, sophistry, pride of knowledge, loquacity, excessive social contacts, desire for honour and applause—these are great hindrances in the path of spiritual discipline. The practicant should always scrupulously guard himself against these evils.

Kick off Infatuation.

O, how great is the fascination of maya that even men possessing sagacity and wisdom are forgetting their real duty, attracted by the glamour of a false sense of duty. Just ponder a while who you are, and what is your duty—whether your duty lies in extricating yourself from the clutches of this ignorance, or in tightening the knots of ignorance all the more. The name and form caught in whose meshes you have conceived a relation with those who are related only with the name and form and that too by a stretch of imagination only, and are thickening the veil of ignorance through a false sense of duty—do those name and form really represent your true self ? Did you possess this very name and form even before you entered the mother's womb ? If not, what relation can you have with them, and what duty can you owe to

those related with these ? Why don't you untie once for all this knot which you have tied with your own hands ? Why do you labour under a false sense of bondage like the parrot caught on a whirligig.

'What am I to do ? This is the proper thing to do under the circumstances. What will people say of me if I do not do this ? I shall indeed be swerving from the ideal.' Why do you tighten your chains by following such a line of thought ? What sort of propriety are you talking of ? What ideal do you mean ? Is it proper for you to keep yourself entangled in the meshes of maya ? Is it your ideal not to extricate yourself from the clutches of ignorance ? You say people will give a bad name—to whom ? Yourself or the name and form with which you have identified yourself ? Good heavens ! What will you lose through the censure of the name and form ? Let these be censured, let their prestige suffer, let them be wiped out of existence ! Why are you wasting away in your anxiety to preserve them ? Is not all this misery that you are suffering due to them ? Although eternally true, unborn and imperishable, you appear transient and illusory only through fascination for these, and it is attachment for these that conjures

up before you the distressing scenes of birth and death.

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You say your attitude will cause distraction to the whole family and that children and other relatives will suffer. All right. Supposing you throw off this mortal coil today, what will be their fate? Will they survive or not? If they will, they will do so even now. Why not treat yourself as already dead? Really you conceive yourself as dead only for a short while and you will perceive how conveniently you are forgotten, how easily they outgrow your necessity. Surely no one has held you in bondage; it is you who have imagined yourself to be bound. Why not snap this tie of ignorance altogether?

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'What shall we do? After all, one is duty-bound to discharge one's responsibilities. How dare we throw off our responsibility while we are in our senses?' What a sense of responsibility! Letting alone other things, are you sure that you will be able to discharge your responsibility in respect of your body? Your responsibility in respect of your body will be deemed to have been truly discharged

only in case you are able to protect it from disease and death. When you cannot discharge your responsibility even in respect of your body, what other responsibility can you discharge? Have you not assumed this responsibility officiously of your own accord? It is infatuation masquerading as Love which has imposed this burden of responsibility and duty on your head. Why not take this burden off your head and throw it away? Immediately you will feel disburdened and light.

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If you see things for yourself you will find that there is no room for sorrow, death and suffering in your real nature which is eternally free from all diseases and consists of bliss consolidated. You are the essence of ambrosia, the essence of bliss, the origin and fount of all light. It is your effulgence which is diffused all around, your light which is radiating everywhere, your glory which pervades the whole universe, your bliss which is scattered over earth and heaven and your nectarean sweetness which sustains all life. You are indivisible, infinite, ageless, immortal, eternal; you are Existence, Consciousness and Knowledge itself. Why don't you realize this nature of yours? Why are you spinning round

through the windings of a labyrinth due to your own wilful error?

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Worldly obligations will never come to an end. Even success in this world is a failure. That infinite joy which is a part and parcel of your being, you shall realize within yourself. You will not derive it from wealth, enjoyments, victory, fame,—propriety of conduct, *Dharma* (Righteousness), nor will you find it in any of these. Such being the case, why are you knocking about hither and thither like a madcap, bearing the burden of duty and responsibility on your head and uselessly worrying over ideas of propriety and impropriety?

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The eternal spirit, that you are, is neither born nor dies; it has neither sprung from any other source, nor undergone any transformation of itself. It is unborn, eternal, constant and ancient, it does not die with the death of the body nor does it perish on the extinction of anything else. It is minuter than the minutest and bigger than the biggest object. It resides within you, it is your own self. Recognize it and realize its glory and all your grief, sorrow and illusion will vanish forthwith.

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Do Not Glorify your Own Personality.

Take care that you do not begin to glorify your own personality in the name of preaching the glory of religion, morality, Devotion to God, spiritual wisdom and other-worldliness. This may happen very easily, indeed. In the beginning, when the motive is pure, the doctrine you preach or the truths you seek to inculcate are no doubt in the forefront of your activity, but as you proceed and the sphere of your activity extends, the creed you profess and the principles you stand for are gradually thrown into the background, and your self or individuality is brought into bold relief. In place of God, religion, spirituality, and non-worldliness, the personality of the preacher begins to be exalted and he too takes delight in this self-glorification. This is how new sects and denominations come into existence.

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Surely the personality of the individual through whom people derive or expect to derive some benefit receives adoration and his fame is scattered abroad. Nevertheless the individual should always

guard himself against publicity and honour. Unless this is done, the result will be that his own personality will prove a hindrance to the propagation of the very ideas for which he stood and for disseminating which he entered the arena of activity. To enhance his own personal glory, he will seek popularity and will thus deviate and fall from his original aim and objective.

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Even where the motive appears pure the preacher through ignorance begins to feel the necessity of attaining popularity. He argues within himself that the propagation of ideas like Devotion to God will be possible only when through personal attraction for him people will begin to lend ears to his words, and in order to draw them towards him he must introduce some attractive features in his living, his profession and practice, his speech, behaviour, language, intonation of his voice and in his gestures and posture. There is no doubt that the external conduct and internal attitude of all devotees of God should be marked by some special features which differentiate them from the ordinary run of people, which serve as object-lessons to the latter to shape their character and thereby help in the propagation of true Devotion. A

devotee whose conduct is open to objection cannot propagate the ideal of true devotion inasmuch as he sets a bad example before the people. In fact, he is no devotee at all. A true devotee can never be guilty of any objectionable conduct. But even this speciality in the shape of unimpeachable conduct should be natural and not assumed for the sake of demonstration. Where there is a sense of display there it should be taken for granted that the desire for personal aggrandizement, which has its source in ignorance, lurks in the mind of the individual, and it is this desire which is mainly responsible for making us feel that the popularity of the preacher is necessary for the propagation of spiritual ideas and love of God.

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A person who seeks popularity is not necessarily a man of pure and irreproachable conduct. He has to be more careful about his external behaviour and conduct. That is why he will sing in a sweet voice, will deliver nice and attractive speeches, will dance, will speak in various intonations in order to play upon the emotions of the people, will make gesticulations and change his facial expressions, will sit in a meditative posture, and will do many other things besides. All the time

he will be anxious to see whether people feel drawn towards him through his music, speech, spiritual dissertations and his meditative posture. The aesthetic value of music, dance and acting cannot be denied, nay, to a certain extent they have their use even in propaganda: but so far as they are resorted to merely for the sake of gaining popularity, it should be taken for granted that the desire for self-advertisement lies concealed behind them, whatever be the motive for such self-advertisement. If you are a spiritual aspirant, and are anxious for your spiritual growth, you should never allow such a desire to lurk in any corner of your heart. Propagate the ideas of Devotion and morality only in a spirit of service to God.

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The fact of the matter is that ideas of Devotion, Knowledge and Dispassion cannot be propagated through external preaching or propaganda. Their message has to be delivered only by truly qualified souls to those who are otherwise qualified to receive it, and it is in that case alone that the message is seen to fructify.



Shun Greed, Lust and Renown.

Practicants should never develop identification with wealth, which is a source of great intoxication. It is difficult for a moneyed man to acquire humility in the true sense of the term,

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Wealth brings in its train a number of other evils which act as hindrances on the path of God-Realization. Acquisition of wealth develops greed, and failure to acquire it brings despair and sorrow. Thoughts directed towards wealth prove a fruitful source of distraction to one who seeks to concentrate his mind on God. Be contented, therefore, with what little you have got; but if that fails to satisfy your actual needs strive to get more through honest and legitimate means. If you are already in possession of wealth, look upon it as belonging to God, and utilize it in the service of God as you deem fit. This is the best use of wealth. Never squander it on frivolous pursuits nor utilize it in oppressing others. Do not attach any importance to it. Never allow the pride of wealth to possess your mind. Never allow the greed of wealth to get the better of you. Remember: he who is greedy of wealth can never advance on the path of God-Realization.

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Practicants should always take care to shun the company of women. Let there be no spirit of bravado in this respect. Those, who freely mix with women, preach on the pulpit of ladies,

attend their meetings or live in their midst, will realize, if they look deeper within in order to find out the actual state of their heart, that although on the surface they may not be able to detect anything objectionable, there is a dark spot somewhere within their heart, which is covered up by outward thoughts of purity, etc. They will find that there is a more or less natural affinity in their heart, which in the name of reason or under the cloak of benevolent intentions, attract it towards women, specially young women. When this attraction grows through constant association, or through any other cause, the light of benevolent intentions suddenly appears to have gone out and their heart is transformed into a stage for the naked dance of evil desires. Their reason, being indeterminate, finds itself too weak to control the mind. Deprived of the guidance of reason and smitten by evil desires, the mind is easily dragged along by the senses. Thus even externally the fall of man is brought about. Like men, women also should shun the company of men. The unrestrained association of men and women is never conducive to the good of either sex. This is proved by the testimony of scriptures as well as by practical experience. It is, therefore, needless

to say that those who have devoted themselves to spiritual culture should take special care to keep themselves safe from this lure.

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Practicants should also give up the infatuation for honour. Keep aloof as far as possible from such quarters where you are likely to receive honour and even from such activity as is likely to bring you honour or praise, or pursue it secretly, so that honour and praise may not come to you at all. Even if you receive them in spite of your effort to shun them do not accept them from the core of your heart. If you feel flattered when you receive homage and honour, it means you have accepted them. Refusal of honour does not consist in merely rejecting them outwardly. Honour and fame though agreeable and sweet, are poisonous in effect and ruin the spiritual life of the practicant. Therefore, always take care to shun honour and praise.

Methods for Cultivation of Dispassion

So long as one is attached to things of the world one cannot expect to get rid of the wandering nature and instability of the mind. And one can never attain peace simply by regulating the external circumstances of life, if the mind remains unstable and fickle. If you really desire peace, cultivate dispassion towards all objects of enjoyment. Remember that supreme peace can be attained only by one who has cultivated supreme dispassion.

This dispassion is not developed merely by the forcible renunciation of external objects. One cannot be said to have cultivated genuine dispassion if the taste for enjoyment lingers in the heart. When this taste itself disappears, then only should the dispassion be regarded as genuine.

Spiritual aspirants may try the following methods for cultivation of dispassion. These, or other methods of a similar type, may not be invariably helpful to all, nor may it be uniformly possible for all to practise them. Practices will vary according to the circumstances and needs of each individual case. Of course, those who adopt these methods will no doubt derive some amount of benefit. The

result in every case will be commensurate with the effort put forth by an aspirant.

1. Argue in your mind that there is no attraction in the objects of enjoyment; the beauty that we attribute to such objects lies only in our imagination. The beauty of the female or male form which attracts the opposite sex, what is this beauty after all? Is it not a creation only of our imaginative faculty? The skin, bones, hairs and nails, faeces, urine, fat, marrow, blood and flesh—what is after all attractive in all these things? Why does the same form, when dead, appear frightful? It is because the mind does not imagine beauty or attractiveness in that form.

2. Argue to yourself that happiness is nowhere found in the objects of enjoyment, it is through a delusion that you have accepted pain as pleasure. In the Gītā the Lord has described all objects of enjoyment as 'the root and source of suffering', and the world outside consisting of such objects as devoid of happiness, and as a 'home of misery'. Direct your reasoning to understand the truth of this divine pronouncement and consider whether objects of enjoyment are really painful as they have been described to be. Want of these objects is attended with misery; nay, one has to take

considerable pains in order to be able to acquire them, and lastly, their possession, too, is painful. Similarly, their end is painful, their memory is painful, and the conflict between the various tendencies of the mind in connection with the acquisition of worldly objects is also painful. The suffering caused by want of these objects is patent enough. Those who are mad after wealth, know what amount of trouble they have to take in earning wealth. Night and day they are veritably roasted in the fire of anxiety and care.

The acquirement of an object of enjoyment appears in some cases through error to bestow some amount of happiness, but the truth lies the other way. There is no object in this world which does not possess the property of creating a sense of burning; every such object is incomplete in itself and requires something else to make it complete or whole. If you have got a son, you have to make arrangements for his education and training, you have to arrange for his marriage and find ways and means to establish him in life. These and similar other problems and wants continue to trouble you. You find your rival leaving you behind in the race, outrivalling you in wealth and honour, and his son better qualified than yours;

these and other imperfections continue to burn your heart. Yet these limitations can never be remedied in their entirety through pursuit of objects of the world.

Again, what you possess today may be destroyed tomorrow, or you may be forced to leave it, and this will make you very unhappy. This is true in relation to every object of the world. What you find today perishes the next day, or leaving it where it is you may have to shift yourself to some other place. If this is not a painful end, what else will you call it ? The fact is that by their very nature all worldly objects are painful in the end. They appear to gratify us through error only at the moment they are enjoyed. The ringworm gives us momentary relief when scratched, but the after-effect of such scratching is painful inasmuch as it causes a burning sensation in the skin. The momentary pleasure derived from contact of the senses with their objects is exactly of this nature.

'O how happy I was in former days ! I had plenty of wealth, and my house was humming with children and attendants; I had the vigour of youth; as for my wife, she was a paragon of beauty and good manners. My fame was spread

over the wide world. Alas! everything is lost now. There is no one so wretched and miserable as I am.' This is how the memory of things we possessed heretofore gives us pain in the end. Suppose we want something, how is that to be obtained? A certain method is suggested by a friend today. Next day he says, no, that is not the way, do this. The original method suggested by him was harmless, there was no sin involved in it; the alternative method involves sin, but what is to be done? The object has to be achieved somehow. The struggle between pure and impure impulses upsets the mind. There is no end to our misery. We find ourselves placed on the horns of a dilemma. The internal struggle continues to burn our heart.

Thus realizing all objects of enjoyment to be full of misery, withdraw the mind from them. Cultivate the firm belief that there is neither attractiveness nor happiness in these objects. Know them to be full of imperfections and painful by nature. Feel the burning heat of fever when the pride of wealth or youth peeps within the heart or when you find yourself amidst circumstances which conduce to easy comfort, honour and position or make you the cynosure of all eyes,

the central figure in a social gathering, a special object of worship and adoration. Take fright in such situations; regard them to be deadlier in effect than the poison of a snake or a scorpion, more terrible and vicious than a malignant spirit. Let no desire or greed, no wrong idea of public duty tempt you to yield and accept a position like this. Knowing the enjoyment of worldly objects to be something that leads to deterioration of the body, courage and peace of mind attempt repeatedly to withdraw the mind from such enjoyments.

3. To withdraw the mind from objects of enjoyment, associate with holy men and practise *Bhajana* (remembrance of God and repetition of the Divine Name) with regularity and devotion. Through association with holy men and practice of *Bhajana* the heart will be purified and the mind will become steady. The reflection of the All-blissful Lord in the mirror of your heart will get brighter and steadier according as your heart will become free from impurities and calm. And in the perennial and infinite joy of that blissful vision the attraction for sense-enjoyments will begin automatically to disappear. The taste for enjoyment will diminish and nothing but God will attract the mind. Dispassion at this stage will grow as

a matter of course, and the growth of dispassion will make the reflection of God in the heart still brighter. Thus dispassion will augment the brilliance of God's reflection, and God's reflection will in its turn help the growth of dispassion. Ultimately your heart will be occupied entirely by the one eternal blissful existence of God, and all your suffering, dejection and restlessness will come to an end. You will be blessed with a realization of the supreme Truth of God. The taste for other things will vanish once you have had a direct vision of that One unblemished Form made of eternal joy and the juice of nectar which enchants the hearts of sages; you will, then, perceive the whole creation immersed in an unlimited ocean of nectar. Unrest and unhappiness will altogether disappear, and you will find yourself merged in a boundless ocean of transcendent joy. Then you will enjoy bliss as a part of your own being. Although God is one, you will begin to see His infinite sports. What you will become at this stage none can tell, none will ever be able to describe.

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Remember, you will never be satiated with the enjoyment of worldly objects. The more you

enjoy, the more will the desire grow. And if your life comes to an end while you are still hankering after such enjoyments, you will have to repeat the story over again. But never for a moment imagine that dispassion lies in leaving the home, besmearing the body with ashes, shaving the head or keeping long hair, or begging for daily food; nor should you be deluded into the belief that you will automatically develop dispassion by merely continuing to perform the duties of the household. The seat of dispassion is the mind. If the mind is tied to a certain thing you are still in the grip of attachment; if, however, it is free from such attachment, then it may be said to have developed dispassion. It is immaterial whether you are leading the life of a householder or have left the home: if you have not yet been able to shake off all attachments, you are certainly bound. If you renounce the home for the practice of self-restraint, dispassion and discipline of the mind, and if you are ripe for such renunciation, you should certainly take to renunciation. Even so, if you remain at home in the interest of such practice, your staying at home will be conducive to your salvation. Thus in certain circumstances external renunciation may lead to bondage, while

external bondage may lead to emancipation. Therefore, whatever step you take, take it after a good deal of deliberation. Your goal should always be cultivation of dispassion—freedom from attachment to the enjoyments of the world.

When this dispassion is cultivated attainment of peace becomes a certainty.

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Withdraw your mind from the attractions of the palate. Never seek bodily comfort, and cultivate a dread for prestige and position. Develop positive hatred for these things. Even if you entertain aversion to such things, such aversion is bound to produce salutary results for you.

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Never forget the Soul of souls (Paramātmā). Know Him to be your nearest and dearest one—an inexhaustible mine of knowledge, love, affection, grace, mercy, happiness, prosperity and bliss. One who takes refuge in Him automatically acquires all these virtues. He is a boundless ocean of supreme power, immortality, sweetness, truth and beauty. He is All-auspiciousness, All-Beauty, All-Love, All-Knowledge and All-Bliss. He is qualified

as well as unqualified, with Form and without Form; He is everything. He is our Supreme Father, Supreme Master, Supreme Teacher, Supreme Friend, Supreme Benefactor, Supreme Lord, Supreme Wealth, and Supreme Possession. He is your dearest wife and the supremely beloved child. He as mother gives suck to the child, and as a child sucks the mother's breast. He is at once the object of your tender affection and devotion. He belongs to you and you belong to Him. The tie of your relationship with Him is indissoluble. Then why do you forget Him and give the homage of your heart to other objects ? Why leave the substance and gather the chaff ? Why leave the body and pursue the shadow ?

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Remember, the world is full of misery only without Him. Once you have caught hold of Him the whole world will appear to you as full of joy and merged in joy. Develop the faith that you are His own, that He is constantly with you, that He is ever ready at every place to help and protect you. Knowing Him thus cast off all fear. Surrender yourself at His blessed feet.

How to Arrest your Downfall

The cause of your fall, of your spiritual death is—constant thought of worldly objects, and the cause of your growth, of the attainment of immortality is—constant thought of God. So long as the mind continues to revolve on objects of enjoyment, it is impossible to obtain release from sin and misery. If you really desire to free yourself from sin and misery and make your life virtuous, peaceful and full of the highest divine sentiments, practise remembrance of God.

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Remember: The mind which is full of divine remembrance, when it is prompted to do anything, the motive behind that action is very pure; and the act itself, though not appearing very important is extremely pure, and as good as an act of worship. If carried on together with Divine remembrance, even an action like the carrying on of war may bring about God-Realization. That is why the Lord exhorted Arjuna—"Constantly remember Me, and fight."

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Remembrance will become natural and automatic, and will begin to yield joy, when through constant practice, the mind will develop

attraction for God—an attraction similar to that felt for worldly objects by worldly men, or for woman by a lustful person. Till this happens continue to apply the mind to God, engaging your ears in the constant hearing of God's virtues, glories, sports and Names.

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Remember: Your mind is now unchaste and unfaithful, for it regards enjoyments as the source of joy and is engaged day and night in pursuit of such enjoyments. The attraction of the mind for worldly enjoyments and not for God, this is unchastity. This is the reason why it does not feel drawn towards God. Try constantly that the mind's attraction may turn towards God: Hear the virtues of God, chant loudly His Names, see the Divine hand in whatever happens, meditate on His auspicious form, cultivate the association of His devotees, and read over and over again books which reveal His glory.

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Watch your mind and discover how long it reflects on objects of enjoyment, and how long on God. Be careful; for you may be cheated by the mind. You may imagine that you have engaged

it in meditation on God; but it may give you the slip in order to chew the cud of objects of enjoyment, and you may not be even conscious of it. Therefore, watch the mind over and over again. The more you will watch it, the sooner will it come under control. Bring it back whenever it runs away, and fix it on God. Place before it, again and again, the auspicious form of God, the repository of all beauty, sweetness, glory, joy, peace and blessedness. Try to tempt it, again and again, with that enchanting Divine form. Truly speaking, worldly objects are all frightful, they appear beautiful only on the surface. Owing to ignorance, our enemy, they appear nice and sweet, like the ball of sweet mixed with poison. But God is eternally graceful, eternally sweet. If the mind once gets even a distant view of Him, if it can once taste the nectar of that transcendent beauty, it will not easily withdraw itself from there. When God will be the object of love of mind, the lover then leaving everything will automatically move along the right path. Try to make it so. Relying on the grace of God, try again and again to merge yourself in the ocean of His Divine Essence. Through God's grace you will succeed.

Helpful Hints

Do not entertain hatred for anybody; for hatred gives rise to fear, jealousy, anger, spirit of injury and other great evils, which before injuring another inflict injury on yourself. Do not desire evil to anybody, do not seek another's fall, do not wish to see another absorbed in sorrow. If you do so, there is no knowing whether he will suffer that fate at all, but you yourself are sure to be a victim of sorrow and spiritual fall.

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Do not censure anybody; neither be a critic, nor attribute fault to another. Remember—The world is constituted of good and evil. If you go on searching for and detecting evil in it, you will find nothing but evil. Whatever thoughts you cultivate in the mind, the experience you will get in return will be corresponding to them. He who entertains hatred, fear, jealousy, enmity and malice for another receives these very sentiments from another in return.

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Do not feel irritated, agitated, vexed or angry; do not allow haughtiness to take possession of your mind, nor allow expression of haughtiness to escape your lips. If you can do this, remember, much of your sorrow and trouble will automatically disappear.

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Never expect that all will accept whatever you say, all will support your views, carry out your behests and praise everyone of your acts. How can you expect this from others when you cannot do this yourself in respect of others? If you do so, you will get as your lot nothing but despair, sorrow, affront and dejection.

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Have patience; be cool and as far as possible enduring. The world is a wonderful creation of God's wonderful maya. No one knows what it actually contains. You move in a little world of your own; but there are infinite worlds in this universe of God—for there are infinite beings in the universe. What appears undesirable, improbable and impossible to you, that very thing appears to others as desirable, quite probable and wholly possible. If you observe anything new and uncommon, which is opposed to your convictions, do not take up an attitude of hostility towards it. Feel delighted at heart observing God's infinite glory.

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God is boundless, infinite; He alone is everything—there is nothing which is besides, outside or beyond God. Under the circumstances, whatever is and whatever happens, is in God and happens in God. Then, how can there be any controversy ? How can there be emphasis on a particular view ? How can there be any dispute ?

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Whenever any thought of evil, any idle thought enters the mind try to drive it out. Be always on your guard. Evil thoughts are the root from which proceeds evil action.

Keep yourself constantly engaged in noble action. There should be no time for the mind to think of anything evil. Place so many good thoughts, so many items of noble action before the mind that as soon as one thought or one action is over another may immediately take possession of it. It is an idle mind which is the devil's workshop.

Constantly practise remembrance of God; ever think of good to others and feel delighted at the sight of other's prosperity. Do not identify yourself with any party. As far as possible, try to keep the mind alone and silent.

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If the mind cannot be made silent, offer your prayers to God that it may be so. Knowing Him definitely to be ever before you, nearest to you and within you, lament before Him with all your heart. Beg Him to give you strength and noble thoughts and seek from Him His purifying exclusive Love. If you go on dealing thus with the mind, you will find yourself blessed within a few days.

Eschew Enjoyments: Woo Sorrow.

Remember: worldly happiness is an impediment to your progress, an enemy of your evolution, the warper of your judgment and the cause of your new sins and shackles.

Remember: worldly happiness teaches you to take pride in wealth, objectifies your tendencies,

draws the veil of ignorance on your correct vision and smothers the natural current of life.

Remember: worldly happiness makes you a slave of affluence and power, entangles you in the illusive chimera of future happiness, sullies your heart and leads you to downfall.

Remember: worldly happiness develops attachment and a craving for the pleasures of sense, perverts your intellect, arouses feelings of apathy towards the destitute and afflicted and stimulates an insatiable lust for power.

Remember: worldly happiness excites your envy at others' advancement, infatuates your mind, urges you to consider yourself wise and treat others as fools and naturally leads you to insult even noble souls.

Remember: worldly happiness diverts your attention from the supreme goal, addicts you to luxuries and pleasures, obscures the spirit and frustrates your human birth.

Remember: worldly happiness deflects you from the path of virtue, estranges you from God,

damns your soul and inflicts on you the tortures of hell.

Remember: worldly sorrow, on the other hand, helps your growth, leads you towards evolution, awakens your critical sense and expiating your sins severs your bonds.

Remember: worldly sorrow teaches you to take pride in your noble acts, makes your tendencies subjective, unfolds correct vision and allows the current of your life to take a straight course.

Remember: worldly sorrow makes you a master of your self, shows you the means of true happiness, purifies and ennobles the heart and leads you to an exalted state.

Remember: worldly sorrow gives rise to dispassion and quietism, purifies the intellect, arouses feelings of sympathy towards the miserable and afflicted and transplanting you from the sphere of rights to the province of obligations makes you devoted to your duty.

Remember: worldly sorrow makes you humble and modest, awakens you from the slumber of

infatuation, induces goodwill towards others and teaches you to respect noble souls.

Remember: worldly sorrow reminds you of your goal, breaks the spell of luxury, reveals the spiritual power and leads human life towards its consummation.

Remember: worldly sorrow urges you to virtue, takes you under the protection of God, elevates your soul and saving you from the tortures of hell leads you to salvation.

Remember: it is under a spell of infatuation that you crave for worldly enjoyments and looking upon worldly sorrows as a source of terror seek to flee from them. Believe it: a pleasure that puts God out of your mind and induces aversion for Him is your worst enemy. And a sorrow that withdraws you from the pleasures of sense and directs you towards God is your best friend. It is of such pleasures and sorrows that we are talking here and it is from this point of view that we should look into and examine the pleasures and sorrows of the world and turn them to good account.

Destroy your Deformities.

Remember: lust, anger, greed etc. are not natural to you; they are deformities of your nature. Transformation of one's being or nature is very difficult, nay, well-nigh impossible; but deformities can be got rid of with some effort. That is why, while the Lord warns us in the Gitā that "even the wise man follows the promptings of his nature, no restraint of one's nature is possible," He exhorts us at the same time to give up lust, anger and greed, declaring them as self-abasing, rather, the very gates to hell. Thus it is proved that while

it is most difficult to shed the characteristics of a Brahman or a Kṣatriya, it is not so difficult to shed one's deformities in the shape of lust, anger etc.

Remember: lust, anger and other weaknesses prevail over you only so long as you acknowledge their strength and meekly submit to their rule. The moment you realize your true nature and challenge them arming yourself with the unfailing strength of God, your eternal companion and greatest friend, they will become your slaves and seek the earliest opportunity to escape for their very life.

Remember: to say nothing of these weaknesses, the very citadels in which they ensconce themselves and extend their dominion, *viz*, the senses and mind, are your obedient servants. But you have reduced yourself to the position of their slave; that is why they make you dance to their tune and hurl you in the abyss of hell.

Remember: it is these weaknesses in the form of lust, anger etc. that are mainly responsible for all your sins. They and they alone are your most powerful enemies; yet you have not only harboured them in your mind but you also erroneously

glory and rejoice in cherishing, fostering and preserving them.

Remember: so long as the above-mentioned lust, anger and greed and their associates and companions in the form of self-esteem, pride, arrogance, hypocrisy, infatuation, duplicity, mendacity, violence and other weaknesses continue to vitiate the human life its redemption is most difficult. But they are so deep-rooted that they would not easily yield to your efforts.

Remember: however powerful they may be, their strength counts for nothing in comparison to the soul-force and the power of God. Just as darkness begins to melt even with the appearance of the morning twilight, even so the very glow before the dawn of Divine power immediately dispels these weaknesses. They cannot even stand before it.

Remember: spirit or soul is your very self and God is the Self of your self. He is not only homogeneous but identical with it. You have only to realize this and these deformities will disappear even as the dream world vanishes the moment you wake up.

Advance and Attain.

God is the very embodiment of Knowledge, Love and Bliss, Surrendering yourself to God, if you begin to proceed towards Him, you will find those divine virtues manifesting themselves within you as well. Realizing Knowledge, Love and Bliss, you will also find the object of your life fulfilled.

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The more you advance towards God, the more you will gain the light of Knowledge, the ambrosia of Love, and the flow of Bliss.

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The reason why you find people in this world wandering day and night, engaged in enmity and strife, beating their breast and submerged in grief, is that devoid of Knowledge they are merged in the darkness of ignorance, denuded of Love they have fallen into the noxious well of jealousy and hatred, and bereft of Bliss they are floating in the current of sorrow and grief.

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Every being is an eternal portion of God, the embodiment of Existence, Knowledge and Bliss. Every being possesses Knowledge, Love and Bliss,—the endowments of God; but these lie hidden within him. In their place, he exhibits their opposite characteristics. That is why the Jīva is merged in sorrow; although behind those opposite characteristics, also, there lies the ocean of Knowledge, Love and Bliss.

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Man is the best and dearest creation of God. When helped by a favourable association, he attempts with a sincere heart to practise some

discipline, the Knowledge, Love and Bliss hidden within him may come to the surface. For they always lie buried within him.

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Therefore, every moment man should make it a point to remember that he is an eternal portion of God, that he is not distinct from God, that he is the very repository of all the virtues of God. And that very store of virtues is now open within him. Wisdom, Love and Bliss are now his own possessions. He is mixed up with them, and is getting merged in them. Darkness can no longer exercise any influence over him. Sentiments like jealousy, hatred, malice, enmity, violence and retaliation will no longer arise in his mind. The fire of sorrow and grief, misery and affliction will never again scorch him.

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He should definitely make up his mind that he belongs to God, the embodiment of Existence, Knowledge and Bliss. Sin and misery, affliction and sorrow, in any form and shape, possess not the power to come near him. He is pure; he is the Spirit,—the very embodiment of Wisdom, Love and Bliss. He is ever contented, ever the possessor of eternal and infinite happiness—the very embodiment, indeed, of joy and delight.

No disturbing incident in this world can shake him from his established state of peace and tranquillity. Just as innumerable waves rise in the bosom of the infinite ocean and fall in the same bosom, even so the rise and fall of waves in the world take place in his supreme object of refuge, his Integer, God. God is present in those very happenings. They are all, in fact, only the waves of divine sport. At the sight of these sports, He derives the greatest pleasure and delight. The waves of these sports of the Divine Player are all full of pleasure and delight.

He should know that his Lord being the very embodiment of Wisdom, Love and Bliss, the sports of the Lord are also full of those qualities of Wisdom, Love and Bliss—whatever may be the external forms manifested by them.

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He should fix up the idea in his mind that he has understood the Lord—and has recognized Him. In howsoever hideous, frightful and terrible a form the Lord may manifest Himself, he will never be frightened by that horrible form, but, on the contrary, will fall prostrate at the Lord's feet, and will derive pleasure from the Lord's sports, will enjoy them—and laugh!



Cultivate Inward Purity.

Remember: those who are filthy within and seek to cover up the filth with external ornamentation, their filth does not lessen, on the contrary it increases, nor can they save themselves from the evil effects of the internal filth. True good is derived only when the internal filth is eradicated.

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Remember: if your mind is full of evils like lust, anger, malice, jealousy and violence, etc., and you make no effort to remove them, and their presence does not appear disagreeable to you, but externally you are loud in instructing others about disinterestedness, sacrifice, seeing good in others, love and the spirit of service, what do

you gain thereby ? It will lead only to the growth of hypocrisy.

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Remember: if outwardly people fail to detect any merit in you, but your heart is faultless and pure, you are truly pure. Indeed, he alone is pure and good, who is pure before God, who is faultless in the eyes of God.

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Remember: whatever words you utter about devotion, love and knowledge are, indeed, valueless, if your heart lacks attachment to God (devotion), the nectarean and disinterested sweetness of love, and the transcendent light of knowledge. Be a devotee in your heart, feel the spring of love within you, and kindle the light of Knowledge within. Then alone you will derive true benefit from them.

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Remember: external ostentation, though grand and great, cannot be compared with even the smallest amount of truthfulness in thought. Create this truthful spirit. Truthfulness, however small, will conduce to the greatest good—for it is true and genuine.

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Remember: the teacher's teachings should be first addressed to himself. Whatever good ideas you desire to propagate, or actually preach, apply them first to yourself, and if you sincerely believe them to be good, realize them in your own life. To sacrifice one's own good for another's good is no doubt a virtue; but he who does not regard the good to be good in his own case, and preaches it like an actor on the stage, as good for others, can never expect to sacrifice his own good. He does not know what constitutes good for him, he is only playing the role of a hypocrite in order to cheat others, in order to prove in the eyes of others that he is a saint, virtuous in conduct. He does not possess even the simple belief that God, who resides within his heart, knows his hypocrisy and will be displeased with his conduct. Such a soul does good neither to himself nor to others.

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Remember: this existence as a human being is really very valuable; it has been gained neither for wasting it in idle pursuits, nor for the accumulation of sins. Make the best use of it. Devote every moment of it to the remembrance of God. Do not get deluded with this world's

wealth and followings, learning and intellect, honour and welcome, lordship and power and relationships of 'mine' and 'thine'. Life is, indeed, fast running short. Till you are not actually in the jaws of death, and the senses and mind continue to function, it is possible for you to do something. Therefore, with your whole heart, devote every prompting of the mind, every deed done by the body and every gesture of the senses to the practice of Bhajana of God.

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Remember: if you gain in abundance this world's honour and greatness, wealth and glory, name and fame, power and lordship, what do you gain thereby? You will carry with you from this world nothing but the latencies of your good and evil acts. The other things will neither go with you, nor will be helpful to you. Thus the life will be wholly wasted. Not only that, but the load of the sins you are committing prompted by the desire for worldly gain, will follow you and give you trouble for endless lives. Therefore, heed the warning betimes. Try to understand the real object of human existence, and devote every moment of life to its fulfilment and realization.

Rise above Praise and Blame.

Remember: those who defame you are most of them truthful, and are doing you good, though unknowingly. And those who praise you, speak mostly hyperbole, and this causes you injury.

Hence be not afraid of censure, nor hate the defamer, nor consider him to be an enemy. Ponder patiently after what a careful search, he is bringing to light, and placing before you, those evils in you, of which you had no knowledge at all. Look at these evils, try to remove them, and feel grateful to the defamer for his service. Even so, hearing your praise, do not get puffed up; on the contrary, shrink from it and reflect on your true state, which you know well yourself—and realizing that whatever is spoken beyond it as exaggerated praise is injurious to you, keep at a distance from such admirers. Show them neither a long face, nor blame them; and without doing anything wrong, skilfully create such a situation that words of praise in your favour may come to stop.

Remember: the soul has no relation with either praise or blame. Praise and blame take place with reference to name and form. Neither the name nor the form are you. They are only superimpositions on you representing the soul. They are subject to change and are transient. Praise and blame uttered with reference to them neither improve nor spoil anything in reality. Therefore, whatever people

may say with regard to them, turn a deaf ear to the same. Devote your thoughts constantly to your own root, *viz*, God Himself, who is eternal, everlasting, above praise and blame and is ever one with you.

Remember: due to false identification, so long as you continue to regard your body and name as identical with your self, so long their praise and blame, honour and dishonour make you happy and miserable. But the very day, regarding yourself as above them, you become only the impartial witness of their several activities, you rise above the sphere of imaginary happiness and misery. In your unbroken, eternal, blissful state of self, this pleasure and pain, representing modifications of the mind, have no existence at all.

Remember: your true self is subject to no modification at all—it is wholly pure, wholly immaculate. If you remain established in the self, you will, while working in the practical field, no doubt act appropriately; but at the same time you will remain separate internally. Nonetheless, even in the practical field, one must remain conscious that one's action is an ideal one, and is approved

by the scriptures, and that it does not tend to bring about one's fall from the state of Self.

Remember: as in the practical world, you should feel neither joy nor grief over your praise or blame by others; even so, you should not, as far as possible, engage yourself in the praise or blame of others. When, however, circumstances make it necessary on your part to utter some words of true praise with reference to another, there can be no objection to it; but in no case should you allow your tongue to be defiled through the utterance of defamatory words with reference to another. In going to defame another, you will naturally speak of sin or filth, which touching your tongue will defile it as a matter of course, and entering your mind through your tongue will spread the dirt there as well.

Remember: those alone, indeed, are exceptionally fortunate souls and true spiritual aspirants, who do not feel upset when reviled by others, do not feel puffed up when they are praised, and who see neither any evil in others, nor speak of such evil, and whose ears do not feel tempted to hear others' slanders.

Characteristics of a Saint

Remember: a true saint is practically the same as God Himself. Like God, the saint also is by nature All,—everything is in him, he is in everything, he belongs to all, and, at the same time, he is separate and distinct from all. All this happens, because he is one with God.

Remember: the true saint is the prop and support of the universe, its object of adoration,

its very embodiment, its protector, its ornament. He is the prop of Dharma, the very embodiment of Dharma, the personification and protector of Dharma. By his very nature, he goes on performing acts, which continue to protect the universe and Dharma. But in spite of this, he ever lives transcending the universe.

Remember: the saint is ever free from the least trace of egoism and pride; hence he never claims that he has realized God by his own effort. He lays primary emphasis on Divine grace as the means to God-realization. His effort is, in reality, guided by grace, and is identical with grace.

Remember: the saint is, like God, an ocean of compassion; he is by nature everybody's friend. In that compassion of his, there is no place either for cowardice or attachment, selfishness or fear, desire or pride. Just as the sun gives light to the universe by its nature, even so the saint shows compassion to all in the universe. But being very far-sighted, or possessed of the total vision of the whole, his compassion works for the fulfilment of what conduces to real good in its effect. That is why though extremely mild by temperament, and possessed of a heart which is

ever full of the milk of human kindness, there are occasions when he may appear as hard as the adamant.

Remember: the saint is wholly equal in his attitude towards all; he is sameness personified, and is the very embodiment of equality. Without entertaining any attachment towards anybody, he gives his artless love to all. Just as in the case of an average man, when a limb of his body gives either the sensation of pleasure or pain, he feels it equally, for he is identified with, and attached to, the whole body; even so the saint, free from egoism and attachment is naturally identified with all beings. In the pleasure and pain of all other beings, he appears to feel pleasure and pain, and tries even at the cost of his life to remove their suffering and increase their happiness. For their own false self-interest, worldly-minded persons do not hesitate to injure others. Contrary to this, the saint will, with a smile on his lips, sacrifice his body, and all that is held dear in this world, for the true good of others. He does not care even to look at his own happiness or suffering. In respect of such conduct, though appearing unequal, his mind ever remains stable in the state of equality. Neither happiness

in its finest form, nor misery in its worst and crudest form, can shake him from that stable state.

Remember: in all fights between the dualities of honour and dishonour, praise and blame, profit and loss, the saint ever remains equal. When he receives honour, praise and worldly profit, he does not feel puffed up with pleasure; similarly, in dishonour, blame and loss, he does not forget the self through dejection of the spirit. But he does not hesitate to do what is appropriate under all circumstances. Neither is he afraid of accepting honour, praise and worldly profit, nor does he consider it a loss from the point of view of the self to adopt some remedial means against dishonour, blame and loss. But even while doing so, he remains ever above, untouched and always unaffected by them.

Remember: the saint is by nature an embodiment of forgiveness, love, contentment, blessedness, compassion and right conduct; he is ever free from distress, he is personified bliss and the very repository of peace. By his natural conduct, removing the troubles of all beings of this world, he ever goes on propagating, spreading

and increasing among them the above qualities of forgiveness, love, contentment, blessedness, compassion, virtuous conduct, bliss as well as peace.

Remember: though subject to no duty, or obligatory and prohibitory rules of conduct, the saints ever exhibit extreme devotion to their duties, and scrupulously observe all the rules of conduct. The spring of desire in their heart for universal welfare constantly compels them to act in such a way that it may contribute to the good of the world. Though eternally established in the self, beyond the realm of desires, they perform only auspicious deeds, like any ordinary practicant, observing caution about his acts. Though living beyond the bounds of 'acceptance' and 'rejection', they move in the world accepting what is auspicious, and rejecting what is inauspicious. That is why their life becomes an ideal for other men to follow.

Remember: though all true saints internally satisfy the standard set forth above, it is not necessary that the external conduct of all of them should be invariably as described above, or should follow a uniform pattern.

How to serve a Saint ?

Never seek any worldly object through service of a Mahatma, or contact with him. And if you gain any such object, never hold that you gained this through the grace of the Mahatma. The grace of a true Mahatma results in the attainment of a very high object—the eternal, indestructible Truth. Mahatmas do not care for transient, destructible things.

* * * *

Not that the grace of a Mahatma cannot help you in gaining a worldly object, but to attempt to utilize the grace for any such purpose is as good as, nay, even more absurd than securing a huge load of rubbish in exchange for the

philosopher's stone. It means lowering the value of the Mahatma's grace and scattering it to dust.

* * * *

The contact of a Mahatma is bound to lead to the eradication of evil conduct and the evil impulses and promptings of the mind and the gaining of the divine virtues, and when one takes shelter under his grace it is bound to bring one to that eternal state of Truth and Bliss which the scriptures describe as the state of 'सत्यं शिवं सुन्दरम्' (Truth, Bliss and Beauty). Nothing is left to be attained after the attainment of this state.

* * * *

Among the associates and followers of a true Mahatma, purity of conduct is as natural as it is in the presence of the sun to get light and experience heat. If you observe any deviation from this, you should conclude that either the Mahatma is not a true Mahatma, or that you are not a true associate and follower of his.

* * * *

He is a true associate of the Mahatma, who associates himself with the conduct of the Mahatma,

and he is a true follower who regulates his conduct according to the directions of the Mahatma. When these two conditions are satisfied and yet there is no improvement in the conduct of the follower, it should be concluded that there is some deficiency in the Mahatma himself.

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But there may be a possibility of error in this. Among associates and followers there are many who imagine themselves to be associates and followers, but they neither carry out the wishes of the Mahatma, nor do they seek to imbibe the purity of conduct of the Mahatma.

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On the other hand, there is no lack of imposters assuming the role of a Mahatma. A true Mahatma is he who has attained constant union with God; who has surrendered to God all his desires, attachment, sense of possession, and even his individuality; who has become an embodiment of equability, peace, contentment, non-injury to others, magnanimity, simplicity, gravity, forgiveness, patience, Truth and self-restraint; whose heart is never touched by despair, grief, fear, anxiety,

restlessness, lust, anger, greed, infatuation, jealousy, pride, egoism, hypocrisy, etc.; who lives beyond the influence of pairs of opposite impulses like joy and sorrow, honour and dishonour, praise and blame, friendship and enmity, love and hatred, etc.; whose body, mind and wealth are completely dedicated to the service of others; who having absorbed all selves into his own self has merged his 'self' in the *Paramātmā* (God).

* * *

The truth is, not to speak of association, the heart of man is purified merely by the touch, sight, thought, praise or even the hearing of the name and glory of the Mahatma, when this is done with reverence. The impurities of the heart get eradicated through the mere touch of the dust of his sacred feet. Therefore, cultivate true reverence for the Mahatma, associate with him in the proper sense of the term and be a true follower of his. You will, then, become a Mahatma yourself.

* * * *

But never aspire to be called a Mahatma; follow by all means the footsteps of a Mahatma, make your conduct as pure as that of a Mahatma,

and be a Mahatma; but never allow the desire to cross your mind that people should know you or regard you as a Mahatma. The opinion of the people in this matter possesses no value at all. The true value lies in your purity of conduct, in the superior level of your spiritual existence.

* * * *

If there are shortcomings in you, do not try to conceal them; if they are revealed before others, allow them to be thoroughly revealed. But certainly attempt to hide your virtues. Feel abashed through humility when your virtues are revealed before others. Know it to be like death itself to advertise your own virtues.

* * * *

Never desire to hear your praise from the lips of others; know that to be poison mixed with sugar. Words of praise are very sweet to hear; but he who is caught in the meshes of love of praise loses all hope of being released from the whirligig of births and deaths. A lover of praise gets used to hear only words of praise and cannot tolerate any criticism, however true

it may be. As a result of this he has to devote his life only to earning praise. In this world praise generally goes to the person who when weighed in the balance of the world proves himself to be heavy and substantial. The measures of weight of this worldly balance are generally such as go to make a man a worshipper of external nature, that is, transform the element of Consciousness in him into gross matter. If you must hear, gather courage to hear your censure. Do not be afraid of blame. It is true you must never be guilty of any conduct which may run counter to the injunctions of the scriptures, or the inner voice of your soul. A Mahatma is not touched by either praise or blame, he lives beyond both, and treats both with an equal eye. But he who aspires to follow the footsteps of Mahatmas has to cultivate love or attachment for blame and fear of praise. It is then that he can hope in the future to attain the spiritual state of a Mahatma.

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But never be guilty of the commission of an act of sin which can be rightly blamed by others. A sinner can never be a Mahatma. Diligently

perform only virtuous deeds. Try to discover a Mahatma and regulate your life according to his directions. And if you fail to discover him, make it a point at least to guard yourself against the association of those who are fond of others' wives, others' wealth, and hearing censure of others. And make it a point to shun, so far as you can, the company of those who are wordly-minded, who indulge in luxury, who spend their time in idle chatter about the world rather than in practising the Name of God, who waste their time in useless controversy, who are constantly engaged in securing comfort or happiness to the senses and the body, who are greedy of delicious food and covet honour and worldly position.

Do not blame others, nor feel puffed up with pride imagining yourself to be a virtuous soul who has renounced the world, nor entertain hatred or jealousy towards anyone. As far as possible employ your time in practising *Bhajan*, in associating with virtuous souls, in studying books that are likely to give you a turn towards God, in following the lives of Mahatmas bearing an ideal conduct, in serving the poor with a sincere heart without any feeling of pride and in performing your duties

as enjoined by the *Varṇāśrama Dharma* without being influenced by the sense of ego.

* * * *

Carefully avoid talks of women, wealth and honour. Speak little, speak the Truth, speak politely, speak only what is beneficial to others. Never do anything, nor utter any word, which may make it necessary for you to tell a lie in future to maintain your position. Never allow any word to escape your lips unthinkingly for which your position may be lowered in the estimation of others. Remember, he who desires to lower another in the estimation of others is bound some day to be lowered himself.

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Honour all, treat all with love and humility, curb the desire to relate your sufferings to others, hear the tale of another's woes, and if through aggravation of your own suffering, the suffering of another may be alleviated, make bold to try to alleviate his suffering. God truly exists, He witnesses all our acts, it may appear that through this step your sorrow is increased for the time being, but in the end you will be rewarded with great happiness. Through such conduct you will truly transform yourself into a Mahatma.

(2)

Render devoted service and reverential homage to saints and holy men, ascetics and religious preceptors, but the form of your service and adoration must be appropriate to their way of living. The form of service and adoration will vary according to the spiritual level of the person to whom it is rendered. A crown on the head of a hermit, or a strip of cloth to cover the privy parts of a king, will be quite out of place and out of harmony. Homage and service which takes account of the station of the person to whom it is rendered profits both who offers it and receives it, and keeps the social order intact. Render not such homage and service to them as may bring dishonour to their dignified order, or throw the very garb of a recluse, which stands as a symbol of renunciation, into disrepute, may threaten to rob them of the wealth of their spiritual culture or to bring them down from a higher level of spirituality, or which may exercise a demoralizing effect on those who imitate the ways of holy men.

* * * *

The grand old Kaurava chief, Bhīṣma, lay prostrate on the field of Kurukṣetra on his bed

of arrows. Every inch of his body was pierced through with arrows which had stuck into his body and supported it on the ground; but the head having received no shaft hung loose for want of a support. Bhīṣma asked for a support for his head. People ran and brought him soft pillows and cushions to rest his head on. But Bhīṣma refused them all. Summoning Arjuna to his side, he said, "Child, I am feeling uncomfortable for want of a support for my head which is hanging loose in the air, please let me have a pillow." Arjuna, who was clever enough to understand the meaning of Bhiṣma, aimed three arrows at his head and piercing it at three points gave him the kind of pillow he wanted. This pleased the old warrior, who gave his blessings to Arjuna because the latter had supplied him with just the type of pillow that suited his condition and befitted his unique bed. Soft cotton pillows instead of bringing comfort to him would cause pain to the great warrior, would constitute an affront to his personality, would be tantamount to mocking his valour; and what more, they would betray a woeful lack of appreciation of the latter's glory.

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Similarly, to offer by way of service objects of enjoyment and luxury to ascetics and holy men and recluses having no attachment with the world, in the misguided anxiety to give them bodily comfort, which is directly opposed to their station in life, the code of behaviour prescribed for their order, their ideal and the spiritual discipline they follow, is to offer insult and cause pain to them. A saint once confessed to "Śiva" that he did not like to visit householders for the simple reason that the latter generally assessed his needs and requirements according to their own standard and tried to provide him with the same comforts as they would provide themselves with, which not only caused pain to him but even went to defeat the ideal he was required to pursue.

The greatest comfort of such saints, who rejoice in the Self, lies in their endurance, austerity, renunciation, dispassion and knowledge of Self. Their greatest happiness lies in their contentment in Self, and they derive supreme satisfaction from the satisfaction of the soul. To try to attract the mind of such pious souls towards objects of enjoyment and luxury by placing such objects

before them is to mock them through lack of appreciation of their real character.

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Although indulgence and abstinence make no difference to a realized soul, established as he is in a state of eternal and undisturbed equilibrium, yet it must be recognized that the ideal of *Sannyāsa* (the order of recluses) is dispassion and renunciation. The devotees of such Mahātmās should, therefore, render real services to them by helping them to maintain this ideal. If they do not do so, they will be guilty of vitiating their ideal. Moreover, it is the exalted souls whose ways of life are imitated by the generality of people. If Mahātmās, who have renounced the world and embraced the order of recluses, begin to indulge themselves freely like ordinary men of the world, openly or in secret, even in order to please their devotees, realized souls who are free from egoism and attachment will lose nothing thereby but the ideal of *Sannyāsa*, whose very soul is renunciation, will nonetheless be vitiated. The consequence of this will be that simple and innocent aspirants who are not yet mature in their *Sādhana* will raise strong barriers of attachment across their path

by following the ways of such recluses and their progress will be positively retarded. As for impostors, who are given to the pursuit of sensual pleasures, they will get a splendid opportunity to achieve their own selfish ends. They will exploit the names of these Mahātmās in order to justify their own weaknesses. The result will be ruinous for these impostors as well as their associates and companions.

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Even a tried soldier, who has been hardened in battle, may turn his back on the battle-field, if instead of the military band that rouses his passion for war he is treated to the sweet and dulcet music of the guitar or flute or the entrancing melody of love-songs, or if his mind is diverted by placing before him various objects of enjoyment and physical comfort, or, again, if his tender feelings of affection are roused by drawing before him a picture of the miserable lot of his people; similarly, to talk of worldly enjoyments now and again before practicants who have denied themselves worldly comforts and are treading the path of renunciation and to allure their minds by offering them objects of enjoyment and comfort is to help in dragging them down from their noble and sacred path.

"Śiva" has personal knowledge of many a practicant who practised great self-denial before, but whose devotees and disciples subverted their ideal of renunciation and dragged them down from their adorable position through their ignorance. Those very ascetics who loathed to keep anything with them at one time were found to be anxious to accumulate trivial objects of enjoyment. Things went so far, and their habits got so much spoiled that they now began to be troubled by want of such objects of enjoyment and they began to press their devotees and disciples for supplying the same. Devotees and disciples, too, offer things with reverence only so long as the guru is loath to accept them. The world is anxious to bestow gifts on those disinterested souls alone who refuse to accept them. The moment you stretch your hand for some gift, donors will turn their backs on you. Then you will have to take recourse to begging and evoke the mercy of the donor by a recital of the tale of your woes and wants. Our sense of respect for anyone rouses the feeling of compassion in our hearts for him, but such compassion, too, does not last long. If a gift is made after that, it will be made with some amount of reluctance

and irreverence and with a feeling of annoyance and vexation. Such a gift is absolutely Rajasic in character and later on it becomes Tamasic and thus brings about the downfall of both the giver and the receiver—'अधो गच्छन्ति तामसाः'.

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"Śiva" does not mean that you should refuse to serve saints and holy men, serve you must, and that too with reverence and devotion; nay, when the occasion demands you must be prepared even to dedicate your all to their service. Give up the richest of your possessions at their bidding. But do not in your ignorance be misguided to molest a true ascetic in the name of administering comfort to him; and do not cause pain to him by trying to vitiate his ideal. Do not undermine the charm of renunciation that he possesses, which draws to him thousands of men and women who derive their spiritual light from him.

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Similarly, if any relation of yours, a brother, son or friend, adopt the ideal of self-restraint, do not in your ignorance attempt to drag him from that path to the hellish life of worldly enjoyment. A life of enjoyment appears pleasant

in the beginning, but its consequence is very terrible. Renunciation on the contrary, appears terrible in the beginning, but its consequence is agreeable and sweet. True enjoyment, true happiness, the enjoyment of a divine life is secured only through renunciation. By giving up the trivial enjoyments of sense we derive that rare enjoyment, that supreme joy, which knows no change, cessation, limitation or destruction; which is eternal, true, constant, certain, immutable, infinite, boundless, indivisible, indefinable and indescribable. When this enjoyment is attained, there remains no distinction between Enjoyment (Bliss) and God. In fact, they are two different names of one and the same entity.

(3)

Human life, which is so priceless, is being wantonly wasted. All of us are seated in the very jaws of death. When death overtakes you all of a sudden, you will find yourself unable to do anything. Wealth, honour, family prestige, learning, fame, power and similar other possessions, in which you take pride today, none of these will avail you at that fateful hour. You will

mourn their impending separation and will cast a despondent look towards them. But, alas, you will find yourself helpless, you will not be able to make use of them, nor will they come forward to render you any service. Then you will realize that you committed a great blunder in throwing away this rare gift of a human life bestowed upon you by God through His grace, after successive births in other wombs. You will repent and weep, but what will repentance avail, when it is no longer possible to retrieve the error.

Therefore, wake up while there is yet time. Recognize the humanity in you. Your humanity lies in your learning how to love God. Abide by the advice of saints and carry out their behests. Follow the line of conduct prescribed by them for you and try to emulate them. Remember; if you do so you will realize the goal of your life. Divine grace will descend on you. All your sins and afflictions will disappear. Your mind will be merged in the ocean of nectarean bliss and tranquillity. The gift of Divine Love will be bestowed on you. Thus you will attain supreme success in your life.

But remember, nothing will be gained by mere outward imitation of the habits and manners of

saints. Now-a-days people either ignore the saints, or in their eyes saints do not possess any importance at all. And of those few who feel attracted towards saints the majority consists of those who have little or no attraction for their saintly virtues, their love of God and their high spiritual attainments; they have generally no knowledge of these things. What attracts them is the honour and respect in which they are held, the homage and worship they receive, and the miracles performed by them, that is, the external side of a saint's life; and they, too, attempt to acquire those very objects. They are seized by the infatuation for honour and respect, homage and worship and fame and renown and with a view to acquiring these, they try to develop miraculous powers in themselves. But occult powers cannot be acquired without proper practice of yoga, so they pretend to show miracles which they do not really possess. The result is, they bring ruin to themselves, and in addition, bring the fair name and garb of saints into disrepute. Nay, they help to develop irreverence in the minds of their devotees, and lead them away from the path of virtue and religion. It is out of question for such people to

develop yogic powers. For, of the eight rungs of the ladder of yoga, the first two are *Yama* and *Niyama*. *Yama* consists of *Ahimsā* (non-injury to others), Truth, Non-stealing, *Brahmacharya* (continence) and Non-acquisition of things; while *Niyama* consists of Purity, Contentment, Austerity, Study of scriptures and Meditation on God. These two constitute the foundation on which the structure of yoga is reared. Just as there can be no construction without a foundation, similarly there can be no success in yoga without the practice of *Yama* and *Niyama*. That is why the so-called yogis can be had in abundance today, but a true yogi, who has really mastered the powers of yoga, is rarely met with. Therefore, do not falsely imitate the manners of saints for acquiring honour and respect. Imitate them in the true sense by following their conduct in order to become a saint yourself, and not for being called a saint.

Inscrutable are the ways of saints. Who can properly recount their glories ? The ultimate Truth, which is eternal, uniform, which pervades all, supports all, regulates all, and comprehends all; whose existence is the basis of all existing things, whose self-evident truth substantiates all

proofs, whose Consciousness lends consciousness to all, and whose bliss imparts joy to all; who is not something apart from this Existence, Proof, Consciousness and Bliss, but is Existence, Proof, Consciousness and Bliss itself; nay, who is only partially described by the above description, and is really beyond description and beyond conception; he alone who is eternally, irrevocably and inseparably established in this Supreme *Sat* (Reality) truly exists and such a being alone deserves to be called a saint.

To attempt to define or characterize a saint is an attempt to dislodge him from his transcendent state,—although it is true that he is never dislodged, his existence being wholly merged in the existence of *Achyuta* (God, who cannot be shaken or dislodged), it is nothing but childishness to attempt to measure a saint through the defective yard-stick of our intellect. If this childishness represents the simple, artless heart of a child, even this childishness may be highly fruitful in the spiritual sense. For remembrance or thought of saints through any motive except an evil one is profitable, because association with a saint is unfailing in its effect.

What you should do, therefore, is to serve the saints and carry out their bidding. Give up the attempt to weigh them in the balance of your judgment. True saints can never be weighed in the balance of your judgment. You have to secure their grace through reverence and devotion, then they will give you some insight into their secrets. You will be surprised by even a very partial knowledge of their true selves. You will come to know that things which appear impossible to you now, which beat your comprehension and baffle your imagination, form part of the daily experience of saints. They are directly perceived by them and made use of in their daily life. Disbelievers and irreverent or ignorant souls may not believe them, but it is immaterial for saints whether you believe them or not. What interest have they in making others believe? Why should they tell you their secrets? What matters to them is the joy they derive from their experience, they have nothing to do with the certificate of the world, which is itself merged in illusion. No certificate of the world can testify to their sincerity, no certificate can indicate the heights they have reached. They alone stand in need of a certificate from the world, a good reference in the worldly

sense, who are not true saints, but who seek homage and worship of the world by assuming the garb of saints.

The saint is *Brahma* Itself; he is established in *Brahma*, knower of *Brahma*, devoted to *Brahma*, all *Brahma*. He is the support of *Paramātmā*—He is *Paramātmā* Himself, the real self of *Paramātmā*, the beloved of *Paramātmā*, His son, disciple and ward. He is a helpmate in the eternal divine sport of *Paramātmā*, a player in that sport; He forms the material and instrument of the *Līlā*; nay, he is the *Līla* itself, the very heart of the Master-sporter, God. He is everything. He has access to all the inner worlds, even the causal world; he stands even beyond the causal world. But remember, all this is true of a saint, and not of those who simply bear the designation of a saint. He alone is a saint who answers the above description.

Seek the company of such a saint. Pray to God that you may be able to get hold of such a saint. It is only through the grace of God that one meets with a saint of this type. The contact of a saint is in the eyes of a saint even more

valuable than the direct perception of God. For, the secrets of the inner apartments of God are known only to those saints who have free access to those apartments; it is only through such saints that one can obtain an insight into those secrets. That is why saints seek the company of saints even by prayer to God who arranges their meeting with such saints as are in the know of the secrets of His Love in order that their thirst for such meetings and association and for love of God may increase and may become exclusive and one-pointed. When such saints meet together, and enjoy a spiritual feast through mutual exchange of revelations and personal experiences, God Himself relishes the sight. He plays the eaves dropper to overhear the talks of His love-secrets from the lips of those love-intoxicated saints—secrets which He cannot disclose Himself, but which at the same time He does not desire to keep back from the world. He can no longer contain the joy which He derives from those talks and revealing Himself on the spot, lays bare His heart before them, and tearing off the last shreds of veil between Him and His devotees blesses everyone with a hearty embrace. God Himself is transformed into the saints, and the saints into God ! If you aspire

to participate in this divine joy, pray to God for contact with saints.

Through the contact of such a saint the ocean of Bliss will bubble up in your heart. Taking a plunge in that ocean, you will get dissolved in it, and will be transformed into Bliss itself. A wavelet of joy will then expand into an ocean; your very heart will be transformed into an ocean of Bliss and Joy. Whoever will take a dip in that ocean, whoever will sip even a mouthful of water from it, will be transformed into Joy and Bliss itself.

Contact apart, the very remembrance of a saint of this type dispels all sin and suffering, ignorance and egoism.

Such saints are very rare in this world, but those few who exist are quite enough. It is their existence which maintains the welfare, moral, material and spiritual, and happiness of the world. Pretenders and impostors can exercise no influence over such saints. Nor can such pretenders be confounded with them. An ignorant person may mistake a piece of glass for a diamond but a jeweller will never fail to distinguish one from the other. Nevertheless, a saint can be recognized

only by another saint who enjoys the grace of God. The common folk more often than not get entangled in the tentacles of impostors. But a sincere soul seeking the shelter of saints is protected by unknown saints from being misled by such impostors. God also comes to the rescue of a sincere soul. Therefore, develop a genuine desire for the auspicious sight of a true saint.

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If you are labouring under the false notion that you are a saint yourself, shake off this illusion from the mind. Your own welfare as well as the common weal of the world lies in thus freeing yourself from the illusion. Remember, one who attempts to deceive God brings ruin to himself more than even a patent sinner.

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Bow your head at the feet of true saints, get absorbed in their thoughts, prize their words as of greater value than the scriptures themselves, treat the dust of their feet as your most valuable possession, do their bidding even at the risk of life, carry out their wishes, place yourself at their beck and call. Then observe how speedily you attain blessedness.

Reward of Serving Saints

Remember: He who even once has enjoyed the privilege of the sight of a saint, of hearing his advice, of a touch from his hand, or of placing on the head the dust of his feet, has become qualified to attain supreme bliss and supreme peace.

* * * *

Remember: Let alone the sight, touch, hearing of advice, or taking the dust of the feet of a saint, he who even meditates on a saint attains purity of heart and becomes qualified for God-Realization.

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Remember: The sight of a saint, and discovery of a saint, result in supreme good. By coming in contact with a saint even unknowingly, one becomes sinless through the influence of the saint's virtues, which are by nature destructive of sins.

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Remember: Saints can never do any injury to anyone. If they curse anybody, the result of it turns only into good. Devarṣi Nārada has cursed Nalakūbara and Maṇigrīva and the latter had been turned into a pair of Arjuna trees, but in

the end this became the cause of their enjoying the sight of Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

* * * *

Remember: Saints do good even to those who do them injury. It may be possible for ambrosia to bring one death but a saint can never do one injury. The axe cuts the sandalwood, but the sandalwood by its inherent virtue imparts its scent to the wooden handle of the axe and turns it into sandalwood. Similarly, the saint does good even to his persecutor.

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Remember: It is the nature of saints to do good to others, they live only for others' good. They do not consciously make any effort, and yet automatically they bring blessing to others.

* * * *

Remember: The saint himself lives beyond the pleasure and pain of the world, he has no attachment for any worldly object; in no circumstances he becomes subject to the influence of the ego and yet he appears as being subject to joy and sorrow in sympathy with the joy and sorrow of others. This is his nature.

* * * *

Remember: The saint has no attachment for the body, he regards the body as unreal. In his view there is no existence except that of God. And yet he easily sacrifices his own body in order to prevent sufferings with which the bodies of others are overtaken. This is also his nature.

* * * *

Remember: None can recognize a saint with the help of his intellect merged in the attractions of the world. The saint lives far above the thoughts of the intellect. None can recognize him through any external signs and marks. The discovery and recognition of a saint is possible only through God's grace and the grace of saints. Therefore, pray only to God and to the saints for the privilege of association with and recognition of a saint.

* * * *

Remember: The best form of service and worship of saints lies in following with reverence and courage the path shown by them. He who by his own practices pays homage to the practices of saints renders service to saints in its true and real sense.

True Education

In the language of the moderns, 'higher education' means securing University degrees, and institutions where students are prepared for these degrees are known as institutes for higher studies or colleges. A body which controls several such colleges is called a University. 'Higher education' in the true sense of the term should, however, be taken to mean that education which elevates the heart of man, which acquaints him with the higher truths of life,—in fact, which enables him to know and realize the ultimate Truth. An education which develops only the reason or intellect of man, and keeps him away from Truth, is anything but 'higher education'.

* * * *

If there is need for this latter type of education, you may go in for it and impart it; but designate it as 'Language Study', 'Science Study', 'Agricultural Study', or 'Mathematical Study'. Even if you do not adopt this terminology, at least know that what you term 'higher education' is nothing more than that. At the same time do not ignore 'higher education' in the true sense of the term. That education is knowledge of the Soul or Spiritual knowledge (अध्यात्मविद्या). Remember the words of the Lord

uttered in the Gītā 'अध्यात्मविद्या विद्यानाम्' (Of all knowledge, the knowledge of the Soul is the highest; it is divine in essence).

* * * *

Knowledge of the Soul, again, does not mean that verbal knowledge which simply confers on you the privilege of adorning your name with epithets like 'Vedānta-ratna' (jewel of *Vedānta*) or 'Bhakti-koustubha' (Best jewel of *Bhakti*). True knowledge of the Soul is that which elevates your mind, which stimulates in you the quest for Truth, which inclines you towards Truth. The pursuit of this knowledge has to be continued till you have actually realized the Truth.

* * * *

Remember: without spiritual knowledge you cannot turn your face towards Truth, you cannot advance on the path of Truth and you cannot realize the Truth. And without the realization of Truth human life goes in vain.

* * * *

The initial advantage derived from this knowledge is that life becomes disciplined. He whose life is not disciplined, who has no control over his

body, senses and mind, who is, in fact, a slave to his senses, cannot be called a true man of learning. The man of discipline alone is free, even though he may be in physical bondage. Contrary to this, he who obeys no law, who is unrestrained and licentious, is wholly under subjection. The knowledge which as its first fruit removes the fetter of this subjection is true spiritual knowledge. In the seminaries of the ancient Hindus, boys were given practical training in this discipline at the very start of their career as students.

* * * *

The next advantage that we derive from this knowledge is the acquirement of noble sentiments and divine virtues. The knowledge which fills our mind with vicious ideas and evil propensities and corrupts our actions is only a euphemism for Ignorance. Spiritual knowledge fills the heart with noble sentiments and adorns our conduct with the best of virtues.

* * * *

The third gain is that it turns one's face towards Truth and puts one on the track of Truth. He alone is virtuous who is engaged in

the search for Truth. Truthfulness in speech, conduct and dealings with others is the only means of realizing the Truth. And Truth is another name for God.

* * * *

The ultimate gain derived from spiritual knowledge is realization of God. This is a state which rids man once for all of all his sorrows and sufferings and secures him eternal and everlasting joy of the highest type. It is of the nature of Supreme Joy itself. There is no enjoyer in that state. It is of the nature of Knowledge and Consciousness itself. It is the Supreme Truth.

* * * *

The goal of human life is to realize this Supreme Truth; keeping your eyes fixed exclusively on this goal, advance steadily towards it with a determined will. Spiritual knowledge is that which aims at the realization of this goal; that alone is 'higher education' in the true sense of the term; nay, that is real and true education.

* * * *

This is, however, no substitute for secular education, whose utility cannot be denied in the

practical field of life. Do not neglect the world. Attend to your worldly duties properly, but keep your eyes fixed on the goal. If you always keep the goal before your eyes, your worldly duties will prove helpful to you rather than a hindrance.

* * * *

But a preliminary training is required even for determining one's goal and holding fast to it. That training is called religious education. Therefore, try to make this education available to every child at home as well as in schools and colleges, so that the boy or girl may be able to determine his or her goal and to keep his or her gaze fixed on it even while receiving training for practical life.

* * * *

Pray to God, and resolve with the conviction of your soul, that you and your children may have God and God alone as the goal of their life, that you may perform all your worldly duties for His sake, that you may live for Him, and finally cast off this mortal coil for His sake and with your thoughts fixed on Him, and find refuge at His sacred feet.

Real Virtue

Remember: the virtue, which does not tend towards the growth of divine Love, has some germ of evil hidden within it. Seek for it, and remove it. The true mark of virtue lies in this that it invariably helps one to advance on the Godward path.

* * * *

Remember: in a man who is proud of his virtues, and regards his own self as the architect of his virtues, the number of virtues begins to grow less, and the process of purification stops. His pride of virtue points out to him the presence of evil in others, and produces in him a superiority complex and hatred for others. The result of this may lead gradually to lack of love, harshness, enmity, malice, and, finally, even to violent acts and retaliation.

* * * *

Remember: when the fault-finding habit gets rooted in a man, an insignificant lapse in another appears to him as a serious defect, he begins to attribute evils to others even without foundation; and, in the end, none is left in this world in whom he does not discover evil, in one form or another; so much so, that he begins to detect defects even in God, the very embodiment of auspiciousness.

* * * *

Remember: the more there is growth of the fault-finding spirit, the more the mind is centred on the thought and remembrance of evil. As a result of this, the aversion for evil disappears, and love for evil begins to grow.

* * * *

Remember: the constant recurrence of the thought and remembrance of evil, even with the best of intentions, leaves various imprints of the evil on the mind and the heart; these imprints, again, prompt repeated thought and remembrance of evil, and thus the virtues begin to grow thin and attenuated.

Remember: when thus layer upon layer of evils settle both within and outside, and the mind stuff gets wholly mixed up with them, all the virtues grow so thin that they practically disappear. The result is that the evils are then regarded as merits and sins begin to appear as virtues.

Remember: when once the reasoning faculty begins to see the merits as evils and evils as merits, the entire mental world gets filled up with evil, and the attachment for evil grows and repeated attempts are then made for accumulating fresh and ever fresh evils.

* * * *

Remember: virtues become constant only when they are offered to God, and when the grace of

God is regarded as the cause of their attainment. In that case, the grace of God prevents the growth of pride and preserves the virtues with very great care. Then, these virtues are treated as flowers for the worship of God and their sweet scent fills up the entire surrounding atmosphere spreading happiness and peace all about them.

* * * *

Remember: those alone are virtues worth the name, which being free from the stains of worldly desires, pride and attachment, etc. are fit to be offered at the feet of God. Virtues which bear within them the stains of arrogance, attachment, allurement and worldly desire, lose the merit of being offered to God. They lead only to the growth of stigma and evil.

* * * *

Remember: that alone is virtue, that alone is good fortune, which influences one to spend the human life in the remembrance of God. Compared to a long life full of arrogance born of virtues, even that fraction of an hour is supremely superior, when man feeling himself humbler than even a blade of grass, and regarding himself entirely powerless, entirely meritless, succeeds in taking shelter at the sacred feet of God.

The Secret of Equality

Remember: God is present in every being in this world, large and small, high and low, good and bad; He is the warp and woof in all. In form, nature, habit of life and external conduct, great differences may exist among these beings, but within them all lives God, eternally existent in the same state of being, in whom there is not the least difference whatsoever.

* * * *

Remember: he, who moves in the world fixing his gaze on all-formed, all-pervasive and all-souled God, though his external conduct may exhibit a difference whenever it is appropriate to do so, will carry no sense of difference at all in his mind. Established in Equality, he may exhibit inequality of conduct, even as a person though identified with the whole body, puts his hand to one use and the foot to another. In his mind, he carries neither attraction nor hatred for either the hand or the foot. His self is equally identified with both the limbs. Therefore, the use he makes of

them does not lead consciously to anything which may bring either dishonour or harm to them.

* * * *

Remember: one who keeps up the spirit of inequality in one's mind and nurses differences of every kind, but seeks externally to maintain equality of treatment declaring everybody as equal, will never succeed in maintaining Equality. For it is not possible to extend equality of treatment under all circumstances to all beings possessed of different natures and characteristics. The respect shown to a man possessed of wisdom and discrimination will not be shown either to a fool or to one possessed of vile thoughts. It is not possible to deal equally with a dog, a cow and an elephant. You will not treat a snake and a scorpion in the same manner as you would a cow or a goat. But treating them differently you may cultivate the sentiment of Equality towards them from the point of view of the Self. You may welcome them all, and mentally show your respect to them, recognizing them as the living temples of God.

* * * *

Remember: the spirit of Equality maintained in the mind is true cultivation of Equality, for when this is attained hatred and attraction and the

sense of 'mine' and 'thine' totally cease to exist. Then one can look upon all equally as the representative of God, and render service to all equally in a reverential spirit. The thought of injuring another will never cross the mind. If one's own interest is injured by any person, one will not entertain in one's mind anger against that person, just as one does not get angry with the teeth when they accidentally bite the tongue.

* * * *

Remember: he who acts in this world being established in God, or fixing his gaze on God present as the Soul in every being,—his every single act becomes worship of God. It is he alone who can truly adore God everywhere, present in all forms. Nowhere, at no time, and in no being, God gets invisible to his eyes. Seeing the Lord present everywhere, he bows down his head in reverence, and feels charmed and fascinated at the sight of the various wonderful forms, shapes, modes and gestures assumed by the Lord. If you can, similarly, see God everywhere, then the differences practised by you in conduct will also be transformed into worship in the form of practice of Equality towards God who is the very embodiment of Equality.

* * *

Remember: diversity cannot be altogether eliminated from the world. For it is God's field of Sport. If there is uniformity in a sport, the beauty of the sport is lost. If Nature and its constituent parts attain equilibrium, the world will cease to exist. Therefore, for the sake of the Lord's Sport all these wonderful diversities of sentiments, qualities, forms and acts have a necessity. But everywhere in all these sentiments, qualities, forms and acts, God is equally and fully present. He who moves and acts in the world seeing and recognizing this form of God as All, filling up everything, though externally he may exhibit differences of conduct, whenever appropriate, his conduct is, in reality an expression of the spirit of Equality. He is, indeed, a true votary of the cult of Equality, whose outward differential conduct springs out of the internal spirit of Equality, and is pervaded by Equality. One who attempts to show equality only externally, but internally maintains the attitude of inequality, has not understood the secret of Equality at all. Beware of this doctrine of Equality (modern Socialism) born out of unevenness, and full of the differential spirit.

How to Achieve Universal Good

Remember: your judgment is erroneous, doubtful and harmful in its effect, so long as your mind is obsessed with evils like lust, anger, greed, selfishness, hatred, jealousy, pride, fear, spirit of retaliation, enmity and violence, etc., and there is no way open within you for the reception of the divine light.

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Remember: when liberating the mind from these evils, you will fill it up with the light of Divine Grace, and pure, divine thoughts, which are permeated through and through with the desire for others' good, will take possession of your mind, then whatever decision you arrive at will be absolutely correct and beneficial in its result.

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Remember: selfishness robs man of his wisdom and makes him blind, thus his understanding getting clouded, he fails to come to the right judgment. That understanding alone which is not clouded by selfishness reveals the divine wisdom.

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Remember: the divine virtues—renunciation, forgiveness, dispassion, unselfishness, love, friendliness,

humility, fearlessness, endurance, affection and harmlessness, etc.—naturally abide within the heart where God constantly resides, and it is from that centre that the divine light emanates.

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Remember: when your mind will be eager and open to obtain the truth of God, that truth will automatically reveal itself there, and then whatever judgment you arrive at will be true and correct.

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Remember: when others' good, and others' good alone, will appear in your heart as your own good, naturally thoughts will arise in it which will lead to others' good, and you will make your decisions accordingly. And the decision the motive of which is nothing but another's good can never bring harm to oneself as its effect.

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Remember: when Divine Love reveals itself in a man's heart, he will no longer find anybody in this world who is a stranger. In that state, the circumference of his self will naturally get extended. Then he will begin to find that his own good is included in the good of the world alone, and he will no longer be able to tolerate harm even to the meanest creature. The

manifestation of this love totally destroys the darkness of selfishness, and whatever decision he makes in that state will be productive of good, and good alone.

* * * *

Remember: when you will surrender your will to the will of God, it is only then that your decision will be impartial and correct.

Remember: the will of a man, who stands in opposition to the will of God, can never be successful. At every step, he will have to face failure, despair and bitter repentance. All his decisions, all his thoughts will prove faulty and painful in effect, and his life will be spent in constant suffering and unrest.

Remember: if you surrender yourself completely to God, and unite your will with the will of God, and begin to regard your own knowledge and strength as nothing but a part of God's knowledge and strength, then, turning auspicious yourself through the auspicious will of God, and protected by God's eternal wisdom and incomparable, infinite strength, you will do good not to yourself alone, but your every thought, your every decision and your every act will be productive of good to the entire world.

The Truth of the Vedanta

By the term 'Veda' is meant the infinite store of Knowledge. That which is the culmination—the end (अन्त) of all this Knowledge is called Vedānta. The word 'end' here does not mean extinction. The expression 'end of Knowledge' is used to denote the ultimate and supreme goal of all the accumulated store of Knowledge. This ultimate goal of Knowledge is also the original source from which all Knowledge has flowed. This means that the source from where all Knowledge proceeds, and where it ultimately ends, is called Vedānta. The Vedānta so understood forms the subject-matter of the Vedānta Philosophy. It is a

truth which cannot be expressed in words, which is beyond the reach of the mind and which cannot be determined by the intellect. It is beyond the range of speech, beyond the realm of thought.

* * * *

To attempt to say anything on, or write with a view to establishing, this trancendent truth of Vedānta is in a sense absolutely ridiculous. Therefore, it is no use quarrelling over what it is, and what is its nature. Yet due to man's egoistic nature such quarrels take place. Those, however, who desire to realize the truth of the Vedānta should certainly keep themselves aloof from such controversies.

* * * *

There are diverse paths to reach the same Truth, the same goal. The same point or goal may be approached from different directions. A person will move towards the goal from the point of space which he may occupy for the time being. It is not possible for all to start from the same direction because all do not stand in the same direction from the goal. True, the objective or goal of all is the same, therefore, finally all will reach the same common destination; but inasmuch as they are placed in different directions from

the goal, their ways of approach to the goal must be necessarily different. The path that you are treading is certainly correct; similarly, the path trodden by another may also be correct. The goal of both of you is the same. Then, what can be the point of quarrel between you two? Therefore, walk along your own path; proceed cautiously, do not look sideways. Do not imagine that others are following a wrong path, nor abandon your own definite path.

* * * *

Give up all controversy and cultivate a spirit of impartial inquiry. Give up idle pursuits, devote yourself wholly to remembrance of God. Know it positively, the Name of God is such a skilful guide that if you constantly repeat it, it will continue to lead you along the right path. You will never go astray.

* * * *

Along with the repetition of God's Name try to equip yourself with the four necessary qualifications. Discrimination, dispassion, the six noble virtues,*

*** The six noble virtues are—tranquillity (शम), self-control (दम), endurance (तितिक्षा), indifference to objects of enjoyment (उपरति), reverence (श्रद्धा) and satisfaction (समाधान).**

and desire for freedom, these are the four principal qualifications to be acquired. Remembrance of God practised along with these virtues will help you to realize soon the truth of the Vedānta.

These four disciplines are very necessary to maintain the purity of your *Bhajan* (remembrance of God).

* * * *

Betake yourself to the company of holy men with a mind full of reverence, mutter and chant the sacred Names of God, ponder over the unreal and fleeting nature of the world, consider how evanescent and what a source of suffering are all objects of enjoyment, realize the eternal and blissful state of the soul.

* * * *

The soul is everlasting, pure, unchangeable, unborn, eternal, Consciousness and Knowledge itself. It is identical with the *Paramātmā*. (Oversoul). The *Paramātma* can be known only when the soul is known, and when the *Paramātmā* is realized all distinction between the soul and the *Paramātmā* disappears; the soul is then merged in the *Paramātmā*. The principal means of merging the soul in the *Paramātmā* is Love, or transcendent devotion; this Love, again, develops through knowledge of the

Paramātma. The process for the attainment of this knowledge as described by Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa may be summarized as follows:—

"Purify the intellect, worship God in seclusion, take pure, light and wholesome food in small quantity, exercise control over the mind, body and speech; cultivate dispassion towards all objects of enjoyment in the world, meditate daily, discipline the impulses of the heart through Sattwic resolution; renounce the objects of senses such as sound, etc., and eradicate the impulses of attraction and repulsion; give up dependence on the lower self, and the strength of the body, men and money, and shake off arrogance, lust, anger and the instinct of possession; do not claim anything as your own, and make the mind tranquil; then alone you will be qualified to know the Ātmā, which is the same thing in essence as the *Brahma*."

"Then you will be established in *Brahma*, your heart will acquire brightness through joy, you will neither grieve over the loss of an object of possession, nor will you crave for anything; you will acquire an attitude of impartiality towards all creatures. At this stage you will develop love

for Me,§ the *Paramātmā*—you will attain transcendent devotion to Me. Through that devotion, you will be able to know the Reality about My transcendent Form, and as soon as you know it, you will enter into Me. You and I will then become identical."

* * * *

Thoroughly understanding the implications of this incomparable advice of the Lord Himself, regulate your life according to this advice. Then you will realize the truth of the Vedānta. Mind you, nothing will be gained by any controversy or quarrel. Victory or defeat in a wordy warfare will throw you into the whirlpool of joy and sorrow, which are both unreal. Nothing will be gained thereby. Spiritual gain will accrue only from spiritual discipline and practice. Therefore, giving up false controversy, engage yourself in spiritual practices with a whole heart and with all the strength you possess. Human life is after all of a very short duration. Therefore no time is to be lost. Remember, if you do not take time by the forelock, and if this life is cut short in the meantime, you will have to repent afterwards.

Yoga a means to God-Realization

Yoga means 'Union with God', 'True realization of God', or 'At-one-ment with God or God-love'. This is the supreme goal of the *Jīva*. Until he reaches this state, the *Jīva* will neither be satisfied, nor will he enjoy peace, nor will the round of his peregrinations come to an end, nor will his insatiable and secret longing for contact with the Reality, which is complete by Itself, eternal, constant and Blissful by nature be satisfied. Contact with this Whole or Totality is called yoga. The varied and diligent endeavour on the part of the *Jīva* for the realization of this Whole or Totality is also called yoga. Any process through which this effort on the part of the *Jīva* to realize the Whole or Totality may be expressed attains the dignity of yoga. Processes of this kind are variously known as ***Karmayoga, Jñānayoga, Bhaktiyoga, Dhyānayoga, Sānkhyayoga, Rājayoga, Mantrayoga, Ldyayoga, Haṭhayoga*** etc. But remember that any of these practices of *Karma* (Action),

Jñāna (Knowledge), *Bhakti* (Devotion), *Dhyāna* (Meditation), *Sānkhya* (Wisdom), *Mantra* (Practice of Incantations), *Laya* (Absorption of Mind) and *Haṭha* (Control of breath or other organs), which does not tend towards God is no yoga; it is a travesty of yoga and very often leads to the downfall of the practicant.

Therefore, out of these various channels of yoga, choose any one that may appeal to you, and adopt it only as a means to God-Realization. All these paths vary in their nature, yet there is agreement among them. Broadly speaking, there is no path which is wholly independent of another; the difference lies only in the emphasis given to one aspect or another. There are some paths, again, which have much in common and are complementary to one another. This unity of paths can be found particularly in the teachings of the Gītā. Just as no action can be properly done if it is attempted to be carried out exclusively either by the body, or speech, or mind, or the intellect, even so no path of yoga can be perfect without the help of the other paths.

It should, however, be remembered that systems of yoga, which though requiring the co-operation

of the mind lay particular emphasis on physical processes (such as *Neti*, *Dhauti*, *Bandha*, *Mudrā*, *Prāṇāyāma*, *Awakening of Kuṇḍalinī*, etc.), or in which worship of a particular deity in accordance with Tāntric methods plays a predominant part, when practised without sufficient knowledge of their technique or without scrupulous adherence to rules and directions, or in an unsystematic or unmethodical way, bring positive harm to the practicant instead of doing any good to him. They sometimes produce various types of chronic and often incurable physical and mental disorders. It is in this respect that the paths of *Bhakti* (Devotion), *Niṣkāma Karma* (Disinterested Action) and *Jñāna* (Knowledge), etc., are much better than the above systems of yoga. They are comparatively much safer to pursue. But even in these latter forms of yoga, there is likelihood of mischief being done to the practicant if there is infringement of vital rules through blind imitation of practicants who have no practical experience of the path. That is why in every form of yoga there is great need for a Preceptor or Guide who is peaceful and virtuous by nature, and possesses both Knowledge of the scriptures and spiritual experience.

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But it is no easy task to find a qualified spiritual Guide or Preceptor. An experienced and kind-hearted guru or preceptor can be had only through the Grace of God as the result of merits accumulated through successive births. An indiscriminate and haphazard selection of a guru is attended with grave risks for the practicant. Nowadays there is a superabundance in this country of persons who pose themselves as gurus. The fact of the matter is that there are a number of cheats and swindlers who though slaves to their passions of lust and greed, move about the country masquerading as sadhus, yogis, Jñānīs and Mahātmās. It is due to these imposters that even genuine sadhus are discredited among ignorant persons. This proves the truth of the famous saying that 'a person who has scalded his tongue through an inadvertent draught of hot milk would go on blowing through the mouth even while drinking a cup of cold buttermilk'. It is not unnatural if this is so, for among those who are found to move about in the garb of sadhus there are many who, as we have seen above, are addicted to evil ways and habits and are slaves to lust, anger and other passions, or who have adopted the dress of a sadhu as a matter of

profession, as a means of earning money. There is no dearth of persons who talk big in order to cheat the common folk, or capture the imagination of the unsophisticated through a clever show of false Siddhis (occult powers), or who seek to establish their reputation as a man of supreme realization on the strength of their possessing some ordinary psychic power. Yogis posing as masters of *Haṭhayoga* are found these days to be suffering from physical ailments; yogis posing themselves as having attained perfection through *Jñānayoga* are found to be slaves of their passions and hankering after honour and wealth, etc.; yogis posing as masters of *Layayoga* are found to be ignorant of the nervous system and the internal organs of the body; those who consider themselves great devotees and highly advanced in the practice of *Bhaktiyoga* are found to be sensual, and those who profess themselves to be great adepts in *Mantrayoga* are found to be wholly unsuccessful in their mystic performances; and yet all of them claim to be masters, or Siddhas in their own spheres, with a view to establishing or maintaining their reputation and prestige. Practicants should always beware of such pretenders.

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This does not mean that truly realized souls or Siddhas are altogether absent these days. Surely there are such Siddhas present in the world even today; but any such soul will be scarcely found among those who proclaim themselves as great Siddhas before the world and deliberately hanker, through attachment and selfish motives, after woman, gold, honour and prestige. Siddhas or realized souls should not be confounded with those who have developed the eight Siddhis or occult powers described by Patanjali, or any other form of extraordinary power (Siddhi). By Siddhas I mean only those exalted souls who have reached the culmination of their Sādhanā through any of the paths mentioned above and realized God. Such exalted souls have no attraction for miracles, or ordinary Siddhis of yoga. These Siddhis, as a matter of fact, stand as obstacles in the path of God-Realization. One whose mind has not yet developed attachment to God, and who retains even the faintest trace of worldly attachment, will be puffed up with pride if he attains these Siddhis through any particular Sādhanā or course of discipline; the Siddhis will be applied to acquirement of worldly objects and their enjoyment; those from whom he will apprehend even though

erroneously the slightest opposition to his enjoyment, or from whom there will be the least possibility of opposition, will be regarded as bitter enemies and the Siddhis will be applied to their destruction. The practicant will in consequence be transformed into a demon like Rāvaṇa and Hiraṇyakaśipu, and will eventually degenerate into a Rākṣasa. There is no doubt that a practicant who may ignore these Siddhis even if they are attained by him and attaching no value to them rises above them, can realize God. But it is very difficult to conquer the attraction for these Siddhis. That is why spiritual aspirants shun the pleasures even of the *Brahmaloka* (the highest region in Creation), and Siddhis conferring the power of even of Creation of this world.

True *Siddhi* or achievement consists in that pure condition of the heart when there is no room left within it for anything else than God. The highest *Siddha* is he who, having achieved this purity of heart, realizes God through practices performed through such a heart. This supreme Siddhi is attained only after the heart is thoroughly purged of its impurities, no matter by what method of yoga this is achieved. It is possible even to meet an exalted soul

who has attained this supreme Siddhi, but there should be true hankering of the heart for obtaining his sight. When the heart will begin to pine for true *Satsanga* (association with saints) and the soul will thirst for contact with a saint, when the quest for yoga blazing like a strong fire will kill all evil impulses lurking within the heart and dispel by its bright effulgence the darkness of carnal desires, and blowing up the castle of maya will rush headlong towards God, the Lord Himself will hasten to quench this fire, and assuming the cloud-like form of a saint, will pour showers of nectar.

Suppose there is a man who does not practise dissimulation and has no craving for woman, gold or honour; he is well-versed in the scriptures as well. But he has not realized the supreme Truth through practice of any particular form of Sādhanā. He has mastered the textbooks of yoga, but has no practical experience of yoga nor is he an adept in yoga. Theoretical knowledge of yoga can no doubt be acquired through contact with such a person. For acquirement of book-learning one should certainly accept such a guru; there is need for it. For theoretical knowledge proves very

helpful in the acquirement of practical knowledge. But to start yogic practice with the help of lessons received from such a guru is not altogether free from dangers. Such a procedure involves grave risk of injury to the pupil. When mere theoretical knowledge is of no avail even in secular branches of knowledge such as medicine and engineering where one has necessarily to undergo practical training under expert guides, it goes without saying that the pursuit of a Sādhanā like the practice of yoga on the basis of mere book-learning must be attended with grave risks.

Success can neither be attained if the practicant, even on receiving lessons from an experienced guru, neglects to carry out each one of his instructions. On the contrary, such neglect in certain cases may lead to positive injury. Therefore, if you are keen to pursue *Yoga-Sādhanā*, first make up your mind to embark on this Sādhanā, then look out for a competent guru, and if through grace of God you succeed in getting hold of such a guru, carry out with reverence even the most ordinary and commonplace of his instructions treating them as highly important and necessary.

There is one thing more to be borne in mind in this connection. The goal of all spiritual practices is attainment of salvation, or God-Realization. All the various forms of yoga proceed towards this supreme yoga. Then, why not adopt a form of yoga which is not attended with the risk of delay or a fall, which does not involve any hardship in course of the Sādhanā, which is simple and easy and which ensures our reaching the final goal in this very life. Such a form of yoga is the yoga of Surrender to God (शरणागतियोग). It means depending entirely on God and remembering Him at every moment, with a heart full of reverence and faith, to worship Him through each activity of your life, and give up all anxiety and worry placing yourself entirely at His disposal. All other forms of yoga are beset with difficulties, but in this there are no impediments whatsoever. Therefore, realizing it as the supreme Sādhanā, throw yourself heart and soul into it.

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